Re-examining Welsh Catholicism, c. 1660-1700.

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Dedication

Dedicated to the loving memory of my grandparents, both Catholic and Protestant

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Abbreviations

AB – Arts Bulletin

AC – Archaeologia Cambrensis

AHR – American Historical Review

AM – Abergavenny Museum

ARP –Annual Review of Psychology

BASP – Basic and Applied Social Psychology

BL – British Library

CE – Catholic Encyclopaedia

DWB – Dictionary of Welsh Biography

ECL – Eighteenth-Century Life

EHR – English Historical Review

EJSP – European Journal of Social Psychology

FHSJ – Flintshire Historical Society Journal

GLH – Gwent Local History

HC – History Compass

HJ – Historical Journal

HLQ – Huntingdon Library Quarterly

HMC – Historical Manuscripts Commission

HR – Historical Research

HT – History and Theory

HWJ – History Workshop Journal

JBS – Journal of British History

JEH – Journal of Ecclesiastical History

JEP – Journal of Environmental Psychology

JHS – Journal of the History of Sexuality

JHSoc – Journal of Historical Sociology

JIH – Journal of Interdisciplinary History

JMH – Journal of Modern History

JP – Journal of Psychology

JSI – Journal of Social Issues

JSP – Journal of Social Psychology

JWEH – Journal of Welsh Ecclesiastical History

JWRH – Journal of Welsh Religious History

LPL – Lambeth Palace Library

LRO – Lancashire Record Office

MA – Monmouthshire Antiquarian

MC – Montgomeryshire Collections

NAJWS – North American Journal of Welsh Studies

NLW – National Library of Wales

NLWJ – National Library of Wales Journal

ODNB – Oxford Dictionary of National Biography

PHCC – Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium

PP – Past and Present

PPsych – Political Psychology

PTRSL – Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London

RH – Recusant History

SA – Scientific American

SCJ – Sixteenth Century Journal

SH – Social History

SPM – St Peter's Magazine

TRHS – Transactions to the Royal Historical Society

TS – Theory and Society

WHR – Welsh History Review

Chapter One
Welsh Catholicism, c. 1660-1700: Understanding an early modern religious minority

During the town fair of 1679, the Monmouthshire town of Abergavenny witnessed an event that was not commonly seen outside London. Members of the local Protestant community decided to ritualistically process an effigy of the pope through the town, before burning it. An anonymous pamphleteer suggested that the townspeople 'prayed the pope may never come there again, for it quite spoiled the Fair'.[1] However, this supposedly blasé response belies the significance of these symbolic attacks for the town's Catholics. Only a year before, it had been reported that the chapel kept by the Gunter family was openly attended by over 100 Catholics.[2] Monmouthshire generally, and Abergavenny specifically, had been centres of Catholicism since the Reformation. The performance of such a provocative act of ritual anti-Catholic violence in a town at the centre of Wales' Catholic heartland, demonstrated the extent to which the native Catholic population faced new and often grave challenges during the second half of the seventeenth century.

The years between the Restoration and the close of the seventeenth century was a tumultuous for the British Isles. The political and social crises that had culminated in the Civil War cast a long shadow over the latter seventeenth-century. Despite the fact that this period witnessed significant social and political change, the religious concerns that had dominated since the Reformation continued to prove a divisive element in English and Welsh society. The complex interconnection of religion and politics meant that the coexistence of Catholics and Protestants remained

[1] Anon, *The Popes Down-fall, at Abergavenny* (London, 1679) p. 4; J. Miller, *Popery and Politics in England, 1660-1688* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1973) p. 186.
[2] Sir John Trevor, *An Abstract of Several Examinations Taken upon Oath in the Counties of Monmouth and Hereford* (London, 1680) p. 8.

a significant social issue. While non-Anglican Protestants were also targeted, anti-Catholicism remained a prominent part of the political, social and cultural landscape of the country.[3] The re-establishment of the Stuart monarchy, with a Catholic queen and queen mother, led many to fear the influence of Catholics within the royal court.[4] The revelation that James duke of York had converted to the Roman Church created a constitutional crisis, while his accession to the crown and dethronement, demonstrated the degree to which the presence of Catholics in positions of power remained contentious and could potentially lead to serious social unrest and conflict. Wales' Catholic population were not immune to these problems, despite their distance from the centres of power. The late seventeenth century saw the last nationwide outpourings of anti-Catholicism to affect the British Isles. After the multiple arrests and executions of the Popish Plot in Monmouthshire, the tumults caused by the invasion of William of Orange caused North Wales Catholics to fear for their person and property at the hands of their Protestant neighbours.[5]

In light of these turbulent and sometimes violent events, the rowdy parading and burning of the pope's effigy at Abergavenny in 1679 takes on a new meaning. The changes taking place in this small provincial town seem to mirror those occurring in Welsh society more generally. The Catholic community faced many stark problems. The mission in South Wales was virtually destroyed in 1679 and spent the next few decades rebuilding its presence in the region, while those priests operating in North Wales faced significant difficulties as their major patron, the earl of Powis, was

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[3] A. R. Murphy, *Conscience and Community: Revisiting Toleration and Religious Dissent in Early Modern England and America* (University Park, Pennsylvania University Press, 2001) pp. 146-161; D. L. Wykes, "'So Bitterly Censur'd and Revil'd': Religious Dissent and Relations with the Church of England after the Toleration Act" in R. Bonney and D. J. B. Trim (eds), *Persecution and Pluralism: Calvinists and Religious Minorities in Early Modern Europe, 1550-1700* (Bern, Peter Lang AG, 2006) pp. 295-314.

[4] F. E. Dolan, 'Gender and the "Lost" Spaces of Catholicism', *JIH*, Vol. 32, No. 4, 2002, pp. 648-645

[5] D. L. Jones, "Glorious Revolution in Wales", *NLWJ*, 26, 1, 1989.

imprisoned and then went into exile. However, despite facing considerable persecution in the 1670s and early 1680s, Wales retained a remarkably resilient Catholic community, which endured into the late eighteenth century.

The Reformation did not enjoy a smooth course in early modern Wales, with the transition to a Protestant society and culture proving slow and incomplete for much of the early modern period. Historians have consistently argued that convinced Protestantism took many generations to become established.[6] However, despite their conspicuous presence in some parts of Wales, Catholics have received only sporadic attention from historians. Given the limited attention afforded to Catholicism in Wales, discussion has been dominated by better researched areas such as Lancashire, Yorkshire and the south-east of England.[7] It is perhaps surprising then to realise that the communities that were scattered through the Principality represented a significant proportion of the total Catholic population, with the border county of Monmouthshire containing one of the largest groups of Catholics in Wales or England. However, despite the surprising size of the community, native Welsh Catholics seem to have proved difficult to locate within the wider narrative of Wales' religious development in the early modern period. Furthermore, their geographical location in one of the more poorly developed and often lawless regions of the British Isles, as well as their social estrangement from an increasingly Protestant state has made it difficult to

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[6] C. Hill, "Puritans and 'the dark corners of the land'", *TRHS*, 5th ser., 13, 1963, 77-102; G. Williams, "Wales and the Reformation", in his *Welsh Reformation Essays* (Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 1967) pp. 11-17, 20-21; G. H. Jenkins, *The Foundations of Modern Wales, 1642-1780* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1993) p. 43; G. Williams, "Unity of Religion or Unity of Language? Protestants and Catholics and the Welsh Language, 1536-1660", in G. H. Jenkins (ed.), *The Welsh Language before the Industrial Revolution*, pp. 208-9 ; G. Williams, *Wales and the Reformation* (Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 1997) p. 203.

[7] Studies of the history of Welsh recusancy and Catholicism have been largely confined to journal articles published in local history journals. A complete study of Wales' Catholics throughout the early modern period has yet to be produced. This contrasts markedly with the extensive research produced by J. C. H. Aveling, J. Bossy and M. B. Rowlands.

establish how Catholicism in Wales related to the wider experiences of Catholics throughout early modern Britain and Europe.

Some of the earliest studies that have focused on Catholicism in Wales have been produced by Catholic historians and writers. These studies have attempted to draw attention to the significant size of the Catholic population in the region and emphasised the persecution they experienced. This has meant that such accounts tend to be largely descriptive, focusing on the experiences of martyrs, while providing little insight into the motives behind the persecution of Catholics or its effect on the community. Perhaps the most comprehensive account of Wales' Catholic martyrs, tracing the lives of 946 Welshmen executed by the Tudor and Stuart authorities, was provided by T. P. Ellis.[8] While Ellis' account provides much detail about the origins and lives of the lay and clerical martyrs that emerged from Welsh communities, the author's account of the religious history of the region and relations between Catholics and Protestants lacked subtlety and suffers from a polemical tone.[9] Ellis' attempts to analyse the deeper historical effect of Catholicism on the political and social climate of early modern Wales demonstrate the degree to which the study of this religious minority can lead some scholars to assert their own beliefs over the actual evidence. In his discussion of Welsh Catholicism under Elizabeth I, Ellis goes as far as to assert that 'the majority of Catholics' were devoted to restoring a Catholic monarch and rallied around Mary, Queen of Scots as 'practically all the Welsh Catholics were devoted adherents of hers'.[10] Authors such as Ellis saw their histories as proselytising tools to remedy the perceived problem that Catholicism in the modern day had become

[8] T. P. Ellis, *The Catholic Martyrs of Wales, 1535-1680* (London, Burns, Oates and Washborne, 1933) *passim.*
[9] The author tends to overemphasise the limitations of the Reformation in Wales and suggests that the lack of attention given to the history of Welsh Catholicism is the result of a 'conspiracy to prevent it being told'. Ibid, p. xix.
[10] Ibid, p. 16-17.

'forgotten or reviled' rather than 'honoured and revered'. This has meant that these studies offer little insight into the motivations that lay behind the actions of martyrs or the interaction of Catholics and Protestants in more peaceful times.[11]

The hagiographical nature of many of these older and more religiously partisan texts has also meant that there has been a significant emphasis on the physical suffering of martyrs, rather than discussion of the communities from which they were drawn.[12] A more extreme example of this emphasis on pain and suffering as the primary feature of early modern Catholic life can be found in R. O. F. Wynne's overly emotive hagiographical account.[13] Such gory details appear to contribute little to a deeper understanding of Catholic life in early modern Wales. Also, such emphasis upon the suffering of martyrs distracts attention from more relevant and important questions about the nature of intergroup relations between Catholics and Protestants. Instead, they are lost in a fog of rather disturbing voyeurism.

Even historians and writers, who sought to discuss the history of early modern Wales in more religiously balanced terms, have struggled to locate the community within a wider narrative of the Principality's social and cultural history. In the modern era, Wales emerged as a country with a rich Dissenting Protestant culture. As the revivals of non-conformist spirituality took hold in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, chapels became a quintessentially part of Welsh culture. In such a strongly Protestant modern country, the Catholicism of earlier generations raised many questions as to why reformed religion had been embraced slowly in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

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[11] Ibid, p. 109.
[12] Ellis' book contains a section describing various torture devices and their use at the Tower of London, and identifies the sufferings of the martyrs as heroic and worthy of greater attention from the Welsh. Ibid, p. 182-3.
[13] R. O. F. Wynne, *Welsh Martyrs and Exiles* (Cardiff, Catholic Truth Society, 1954) *passim.*

The relationship between history and the construction of national identity has always been complex, with Welsh history being no exception. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, nationalism came to play an increasingly prominent role in Welsh politics. Along with the calls for greater political independence in Wales, came an increasing recognition of and support for Welsh culture and language as distinct from that of the rest of Britain. All forms of nationalism rely on the concept of a nation that has always existed, with the nationalist acting to raise the consciousness of the native population and awaken them to their "true" national identity.[14] History has a crucial role to play in constructing this national identity, and was used to do so in Europe throughout much of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[15] The emergence of political and cultural nationalism in Welsh society also influenced the way in which the Welsh related to their history.

As in many of the constituent countries of the British Isles, religion and national identity in Wales has become linked in a complicated manner. While sectarian divides may not be as obvious or as problematic as in Ireland and Scotland, religion has proved a bone of contention for some Welsh nationalists. The question of whether Protestantism was an Anglicised import was raised by a number of Welsh nationalists, including Saunders Lewis. Many found a resolution to this problem by converting to Catholicism.[16] However, the prominence of Catholic converts amongst the founders of Plaid Cymru belies the wider association of Catholicism with immigrant populations for much of Wales' modern history, and the prominence of Protestantism in the emergence of modern Welsh identity. However, the reality of

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[14] B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins of Nationalism* (London, Verso, 1983) pp. 6-7.
[15] T. H. Eriksen, *Small Places, Large Issues: An Introduction to Social and Cultural Anthropology* (London, Pluto Press, 1995) pp. 261-4.
[16] T. O. Hughes, "Welsh Nationalism and Roman Catholicism", *NAJW*, 2, 2, 2002, pp. 2.

religious life in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had little to do with the picture that was being created.[17] The development of a strong Protestant culture in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was far from certain in the mid-seventeenth century. Furthermore, the demographic changes that influenced the development of modern Welsh Catholicism were radically different to those that had effected the community in the preceding centuries. The arrival of significant waves of immigrants from the British Isles and Europe swelled Catholic congregations on their arrival.[18] This association of Catholicism with immigrant populations, combined with the popularity of Methodism and other Nonconformist denominations amongst the Welsh from the mid-1700s onwards, meant that the history of native religious culture became considerably associated with the emergence of convinced Protestantism.

These political and social perspectives undoubtedly influenced the interpretations of Welsh cultural history contained within the writings of inter-war historians. Clear examples of this can be seen in Llewellyn Williams' 1919 study of Tudor and Stuart Wales.[19] Llewellyn Williams was a prominent journalist, Liberal politician and writer, who produced a rather romanticised account of the medieval Church. Born into a Congregationalist family, Llewellyn Williams was not influenced by the same confessional bias that emerged in the polemical writings of Catholic authors.[20] However, his romanticised view of Wales' religious past is suggested by his view of the medieval Church as working for the good of the Welsh people by providing 'free education to the brightest sons of the poor' and its dispensing of

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[17] Ibid.
[18] P. Jenkins, "'A Welsh Lancashire'? Monmouthshire Catholics in the Eighteenth Century", *RH*, 15, 1980, pp. 180-188.
[19] W. Llewellyn Williams, *The Making of Modern Wales: Studies in the Tudor Settlement of Wales* (London, Macmillan and Co., 1919).
[20] R. T. Jenkins, "William Llewellyn Williams", *DWB*, http://wbo.llgc.org.uk/en/s-WILL-LLE-1867.html?query=llewelyn+williams&field=name, accessed 28th September, 2009

'charity in the homes of the aged'.[21] His analysis of Catholicism in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries focused largely on the struggles of the Welsh clergy with their English colleagues in the seminaries and colleges on the Continent, and he wrote very sympathetically of the problems faced by Welshmen in these institutions. As a politician, Llewellyn Williams supported home rule in Wales throughout his career, and his concerns over the contemporary political status of Wales seem to have fed into his historical writing, leading to a rather nationalist interpretation of Welsh religious history.[22] This is all too evident when he talks of the ruined abbeys of Wales testifying to 'the dream of Welsh independence which was inspired by the waking thoughts, and directed the policy of the princes who sleep in peace in their solitude'.[23]

In the post-1945 era, a more academically rigorous approach to Welsh religious history emerged. In his studies of the Reformation in Wales produced from the 1960s to the 1990s, Sir Glanmor Williams challenged many of the assumptions about the country's religious history that had been promoted in the work of historians of the pre- and inter-war eras.[24] He refuted the view that the Welsh were a uniquely spiritual people, and that the lingering support for the Catholic Church in the region reflected this deep spirituality.[25] He also rejected the suggestion made by writers like Llewellyn Williams that the medieval Church had been an overwhelming force for good in the land. Instead he argues that it had failed to a large extent in its attempts to spread Christianity in Wales, with even the most educated still clinging to their beliefs in a quasi-magical world where evil spirits threatened body and soul.[26] Williams

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[21] Llewellyn Williams, *The Making of Modern Wales*, p. 199.
[22] Jenkins, "William Llewellyn Williams", http://wbo.llgc.org.uk/en/s-WILL-LLE-1867.html?query=llewelyn+williams&field=name, accessed 28th September, 2009.
[23] Llewellyn Williams, *Making of Modern Wales*, p. 198.
[24] Williams, "Wales and the Reformation", pp. 11-7.
[25] Ibid, p. 17.
[26] Idem, *Wales and the Reformation*, p. 27.

creates an image of pre-Reformation Wales as a region that suffered from the neglect of the central religious and political powers.

Rather than seeing Catholicism as an inherent part of Welsh cultural life, Williams instead suggests that the Reformation had a significant effect upon Welsh language and society. He suggests that the spread of Protestantism was crucial to the survival of Welsh as a language fit for great literature.[27] While he acknowledged the dedication of those priests who composed books and newsletters for a Welsh audience, Williams does not afford these Catholic texts the same kind of importance in the development of the Welsh language and the development of national identity that he attributes to Protestantism.[28] Instead he accuses the Catholic Church of hampering the efforts of Welsh priests to produce literature in the native tongue because of its lack of appreciation for the 'national sympathies of the Welsh or the critical need to appeal to them through the medium of the Welsh language'.[29]

While this emphasis on the literature produced by the Catholic clergy is important to our understanding of what ideas were circulated in Welsh society, Williams' arguments present a number of problems. Firstly, Williams, like many others, focused on the Welsh clergy operating in the Continental seminaries during the late sixteenth century. The work of later missionary priests who were known to preach in Welsh was not discussed, leading to a failure to consider the implications of these practices on the Catholic population that remained a significant part of Welsh religious life over a century after the Reformation took place. Secondly, such an overwhelming focus on the actions and experiences of the clergy fails to consider the experiences of the laity, their social make-up and the cultural expression of their religious beliefs.

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[27] Ibid, p. 405.
[28] Idem, "Unity of Religion", pp. 223-5.
[29] Ibid, p. 224.

The emphasis placed on literacy and literature ignores the degree to which Wales, like most of the rural British Isles was still a largely illiterate society.[30] In discounting the rich visual, architectural and social language of religious life that continued to play significant a role in contemporary spirituality, Williams' analysis also limited the applicability of his conclusions to the wealthy, and probably bilingual. Religious culture amongst the lower orders of the laity receives a rather scant attention.

Where Williams does consider the kinds of activities that expressed beliefs outside the state-sanctioned channels of the Anglican Church, Williams was often dismissive of their wider significance. Once excluded from public worship in parish churches, Catholics were forced to find different ways of observing their faith.[31] In recent years, a number of studies have been produced of how Catholics in England dealt with the need to find new sacred spaces. However, there has been no discussion of Catholic sacred space in Wales.[32] Such religious activities are described as 'survivals', medieval practices produced by the lingering superstition and religious ignorance of a neglected population, which 'have usually been mistakenly taken as the basis for postulating strongly Catholic sympathies in Wales'.[33] Williams asserted that

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[30] Cressy has suggested that the average illiteracy rate for tradesmen and yeomen in the period following the Restoration was approximately 30% - 40%. For husbandmen, Cressy suggests that illiteracy rates were closer to 80% - 90%, D. Cressy, "Levels of Illiteracy in England, 1530-1730", *HJ*, 20, 1, 1977, p. 13. Jones argues that these rates of 30% - 40% may well be underestimating the actual illiteracy rates in many regions. He suggests that rates were probably much higher in Wales due to the fact that the majority of the population were still monoglot Welsh-speakers with very little access to printed material in their own language, G. E. Jones, *Modern Wales: A Concise History* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1984) pp. 134-135.

[31] F. E. Dolan, 'Gender and the "Lost" Spaces of Catholicism', *JIH*, 32, 4, 2002, pp. 641-665; L. McClain, 'Without Church, Cathedral, or Shrine: The Search for Religious Space among Catholics in England, 1559-1625', *SCJ*, 33, 2, 2002, pp. 381-399; C. M. Seguin, "Cures and Controversy in Early Modern Wales: The Struggle to Control St. Winifred's Well", *NAJWS*, 3, 2, 2003, pp. 1-17; A. Walsham, 'Miracles and the Counter-Reformation Mission to England', *HJ*, 46, 4, 2003, pp. 779-815; R. L. Williams, "Forbidden Sacred Spaces in Reformation England" in A. Spicer and S. Hamilton (ed.), *Defining the holy: sacred space in medieval and early modern Europe* (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2005) pp. 95-114.

[32] F. Jones has provided a very useful study of the holy wells of Wales. However, there has been no attempt to update this work, or apply the ideas of sacred space utilised in the more recent English studies. F. Jones, *The Holy Wells of Wales* (Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 1954); Williams, "St Winifred's Well: Fynnon Wenfrewi", *FHSJ*, 36, 2003, pp. 32-51.

[33] Williams, "Wales and the Reformation", p. 21

their relationship with the Counter-Reformation was 'very tenuous' and arose 'from no struggles of conscience or a painful search for salvation'.[34] Such views offer little insight into why a considerably large population continued to engage in practices that attracted the suspicions of the authorities in an era when persecution of Catholics could mean financial ruin and real dangers of arrest and imprisonment.

The discussion of these older, non-literate religious practices as superstitions promotes a narrow definition of Catholicism that excludes consideration of popular aspects of Catholic culture.[35] Recusancy and the resistance of the state's attempts to enforce religious conformity receive far greater recognition as expressions of Catholic belief in Williams' analysis.[36] The dismissal of holy wells, local shrines and popular traditions celebrating rites of passage as examples of superstition and religious ignorance have a significant effect in shaping the image of Welsh Catholicism in this period.[37] Williams' focus on literate religious culture and rejection of more popular religious practices as evidence of Catholic worship, makes the educated elite the overwhelmingly focus of attention in his analysis. The fact that recusancy required a greater degree of financial resources and considerable protection from the authorities to prove a viable religious lifestyle has not been recognised as having a powerful impact on the way in which different socio-economic groups within the Catholic community chose to observe their religion. This focus is perhaps explained by the fact that the clergy and the gentry are easily identified as Catholic and more widely documented than the illiterate and impoverished. However, the experiences of the lower levels of Welsh society are of equal importance to those of the wealthy and

[34] Ibid
[35] R. Scribner, *Popular Culture and Popular Movements in Reformation Germany* (London, Hambledon Press, 1987) pp. 19-20, 23-31, 41-43, 44.
[36] Williams, "Unity of Religion", p.225
[37] Idem, "Wales and the Reformation", pp. 21-2; Idem, *Wales and the Reformation*, p. 280.

educated. They represent the majority of Catholics living in Wales during this period and cast light upon the variety of different practices and beliefs that made up early modern Catholicism.[38]

The dismissal of the more popular religious activities that survived beyond the Reformation reflects not only the historian's own views of what distinguishes convinced belief from superstition, but also the nature of the records that have been left behind documenting the lives of Catholics in this era. The fact that the Catholics were subject to persecution and legal discrimination means that there was a clear and logical desire for members of this subculture to hide their religious activities. As a result, much of their religious lives must be accessed through the descriptions and opinions of those hostile, literate Anglicans that chose to record these practices, or through the records of the legal proceedings against those Catholics that were prosecuted.[39] These materials in print and manuscript contain real, often palpable hostility and anti-Catholic prejudice. The perception that Catholicism was an inherently superstitious system of beliefs that preyed on the ignorance of its followers was a well-established part of the anti-Catholic discourse that permeated early modern English political and religious culture.[40] Discussion of Catholic religious ceremonies and rituals as superstition betrays a failure to move beneath these anti-Catholic interpretations, and consider the behaviour they describe.[41]

Perhaps the most pronounced feature of the historiography of Welsh Catholicism is the degree to which it focuses largely on Catholicism up to the outbreak

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[38] NLW MSS Tredegar 7 93/53-56, 93/59-58. See chapter 2 for a more detailed analysis.
[39] There was a clear and deliberate lack of recusancy presentations in Wales. The reasons for this will be explored in chapter four. *CJ*, "29th April 1678", p. 6, accessed at http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=27010&strquery=monmouthshire 18th January 2012.
[40] P. Lake, "Antipopery: the Structure of a Prejudice", in R. P. Cust and A. Hughes (eds), *Conflict in Early Stuart England: Studies in Religion and Politics, 1603-1642* (London, Longman, 1989) pp. 76-77.
[41] Williams, "Wales and the Reformation", pp. 21-2; Idem, *Wales and the Reformation*, p. 280.

of the Civil War. In his account of early modern Wales, Llewellyn Williams felt it unnecessary to discuss the fortunes of Catholics after the death of Augustine Baker in 1641. He described Baker as 'the last Welsh Catholic who played a large part in the history of Catholicism in England', and, while acknowledging that a number of Welsh priests were martyred after his death, suggests they were of little consequence as Wales had been turned to Protestantism by the Puritans.[42] Sir Glanmor Williams provides a more factually accurate and nuanced account of the change from Catholicism to Protestantism, but again pays little attention to the development of Catholicism beyond the mid-seventeenth century.[43] It is only in recent years that the survival of Welsh Catholicism beyond the Restoration has begun to be examined in any real depth. It is unclear why this period has received so little attention given the significance of events like the Popish Plot and the Glorious Revolution to British history generally, and its powerful resonance in Catholic culture throughout the modern era.

J. H. Canning provided one of the first historical studies of Welsh Catholicism in the later seventeenth century in a series of articles published in *St Peter's Magazine*, which was for the Catholics of Cardiff in the early part of the twentieth century.[44] These articles, published between 1923 and 1927, documented the events that unfolded in 1670s Monmouthshire following the dissemination of a series of conspiracy theories. These accusations, originally made by Titus Oates, but supported by the spurious claims of the Monmouthshire conman William Bedloe, claimed to link the murder of Sir Edmundbury Godfrey to a proposed plot to kill the king and place the Catholic duke of York on the throne. Canning described the extraordinary

[42] Llewellyn Williams, *Making of Modern Wales*, p. 201.
[43] Williams, "Wales and the Reformation", p. 21.
[44] J. H. Canning, "The Titus Oates Plot in South Wales and the Marches", *SPM*, 1923-7.

outpouring of violence that occurred along the Marches as widespread panic over the possibility of Catholic conspiracy swept the country. Unsurprisingly, Canning paid a considerable amount of attention to the lives and sufferings of the priests who died in South Wales.[45] However, his accounts do draw attention to the way in which anti-Catholic tensions and persecution was not just centred on London and other large population centres, but also in those areas distant from the seat of power with large Catholic communities.

The strength of the anti-Catholic reaction to the Popish Plot in South Wales has been noted as particularly violent and disproportionate by historians of this period of English history. Kenyon identified the Marches as a region that witnessed an outpouring of anti-Catholic vitriol matched only in the capital, while Miller has noted the widespread rumours that circulated that the Spanish had landed an invasion force in Wales.[46] Philip Jenkins has attempted to explain the origins of this rabid persecution.[47] Jenkins drew attention to the fragility of religious allegiances in the region of Monmouthshire and the close family relationships between Catholics and Protestants across South Wales.[48] Unfortunately, he does not elucidate how or why these familial ties led to such an outpouring of violence. Furthermore, his assertion that these 'unusual' family bonds between Protestant and Catholic were specific to Monmouthshire was undermined by Miller's observation of similar patterns in Lancashire, another part of Britain famous for its large Catholic community.[49]

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[45] Idem, "The Titus Oates Plot", *SPM*, Art. 2, Pt. 1, Feb., 1923, pp. 39-40.
[46] J. P. Kenyon, *The Popish Plot* (London, Heinemann, 1972) pp. 238-9, 244-7; Miller, *Popery and Politics*, p. 160.
[47] P. Jenkins, "Anti-popery on the Welsh Marches in the Seventeenth Century", *HJ*, Vol. 23, No. 2, 1980, pp. 275-293.
[48] Jenkins, "Anti-popery on the Welsh Marches", p. 276.
[49] Ibid; Miller, *Popery and Politics*, p. 16.

More recently, Key and Ward and Molly McClain have proposed rather different interpretations of the events taking place in South Wales during this period.[50] Interestingly, Key and Ward propose from their study of the local disputes that arose in Monmouthshire during the 1670s, that it was the anti-Catholicism developing on the Marches that 'infected the country with plot hysteria and not the other way around'.[51] These disputes involved many of the main players in the ensuing accusations and counter-accusations of plots and conspiracies. Such controversial accusations that the local concerns of a remote corner of the country could come to play such a high profile role in the country's political life, challenge many assumptions about the relationship between the centre and periphery in the early modern English state. It perhaps does not allow for consideration of the kind of political opportunism that McClain has identified as significant in motivating the machinations of some Monmouthshire gentlemen during this period. In both her article on the local dispute over Wentwood Chase and her study of the duke and duchess of Beaufort, McClain brings fresh insight into the political rather than religious tensions that were mounting in South Wales in the 1660s and 1670s. She suggests that anti-papist zealots among the local gentry took advantage of the dissatisfaction with the marquess of Worcester in order to gain attention and prestige on an ever bigger political stage.[52] While McClain has provided one of the most interesting interpretations of the Popish Plot in South Wales, her view of an essentially

[50] N. Key and J. Ward, "'Divided into Parties': Exclusion Crisis Origins in Monmouth", *EHR*, 2000, pp. 1159-1183; M. McClain, *Beaufort: The Duke and his Duchess 1657-1715* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2001); M. McClain, "The Wentwood Forest Riot: Property Rights and Political Culture in Restoration England", in S. Amussen and M. A. Kishlansky (eds), *Political Culture and Cultural Politics in Early Modern England: Essays Presented to David Underdown* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1995) pp. 112-32.
[51] Key and Ward, "'Divided into Parties'", p. 1166.
[52] McClain, *Beaufort*, pp. 107-8, 127-43.

political dispute over provincial property rights does not fully account for the genuine religious hatred that has been highlighted by Jenkins and Key and Ward.

However, it is important to recognise that Welsh Catholics were not simply victims of persecution. Furthermore, while anti-Catholic prejudice could erupt spectacularly on occasion in the late seventeenth century, it was expressed inconsistently. Despite some increase in the attention given to the experiences of Catholics beyond the Civil War, it has been widely accepted that the second half of the seventeenth century was a period of slow, sad decline for the Welsh Catholic community. However, in his important study of the Catholic community of Monmouthshire in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, Philip Jenkins presents evidence that this was not necessarily the case.[53] In spite of the loss of the mission at the Cwm and the extinction or conversion of many gentry families, it would seem that Welsh Catholics continued to go about their religious life in the quiet fashion they had observed for generations.[54] In the early eighteenth century, the exploitation of copper ore deposits in the area around Swansea by the duke of Beaufort, encouraged immigration of Catholic workers extending the influence of Catholicism into Glamorgan. This was enhanced by the arrival of Flemish craftsmen in the 1770s. Jenkins goes as far as to argue that the decline of native Catholicism in Monmouthshire was more a feature of the nineteenth than the seventeenth century, resulting from emigration due to the agricultural depression of the 1880s.[55] It would seem that native Catholicism remained a feature of the Welsh religious landscape into the modern era.

Jenkins' suggestion that the image of a rapidly declining Catholicism in the later seventeenth-century Wales is inaccurate, is also borne out by the experiences of

[53]Jenkins, "'A Welsh Lancashire'?, pp. 176-188.
[54] Ibid, pp. 177-80.
[55] Ibid, pp.184, 186.

Catholics in Mid and North Wales. The communities in these regions did not suffer the kind of catastrophic persecution that occurred in Monmouthshire, but did have to negotiate the turbulent decades that followed the return of the Stuart monarchy. The continued presence of sizeable populations around Powis Castle near Welshpool and at Holywell are indicative of a wider pattern of Catholic observance until well into the eighteenth century in various parts of the Principality. As we will see, the lives of Catholics that emerge from the documents preserved from these regions suggest a political culture and social experience that was different from that in the south.

The historiography of Welsh Catholicism points to the need to develop a broader approach to this area of religious history. The more recent studies that have emerged have suggested that the history of this group is far from marginal and cannot be dismissed as evidence of the ignorance and superstition of early modern Wales. Instead there is a need to consider the community in a more holistic fashion that includes their social relations with each other, their Protestant neighbours and the state. Furthermore, there is a need to develop a greater appreciation of the wider cultural manifestations of Catholicism in Wales, as found in the architecture of their chapels and shrines, their relationship with the landscape and art that they left behind. Many of these ideas have begun to be explored by historians of English and European Catholicism, and have shed new light on the religious world that Catholics inhabited.[56]

Perhaps one of the most challenging aspects of examining a group whose activities were more often described by their critics than by themselves, is to engage with the social behaviour of Catholics. The notion that historians should engage with

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[56] Dolan, "Gender and the 'Lost' Spaces of Catholicism", *passim*; L. McClain, *Lest We Be Damned: Practical Innovation and Lived Experience among Catholics in Protestant England, 1559-1642* (London, Routledge, 2004) pp. 55-80; C. M. Seguin, "Cures and Controversy in Early Modern Wales", *NAJWS*, 3, 2, 2003, pp. 1-17; A. Walsham, 'Miracles and the Counter-Reformation Mission to England', *HJ*, 46, 4, 2003, pp. 779-815; Williams, "Forbidden Sacred Spaces in Reformation England", pp. 95-114.

the social relationships and behaviours that were exhibited by religious communities formed an important part of John Bossy's examination of Catholicism in England. He considered the social significance of Catholic worship and rituals to members of the community and the effect of maintaining an allegiance to the Roman church on the relationship between members of the upper classes and their tenants and dependents.[57] Bossy's emphasis on the social implications of Catholicism arose as a result of his insistence that a social historian must, by necessity, concentrate his or her analysis of religion on its behavioural expression. He acknowledged that this meant that the historian was working from an inherently limited evidence base, but argued that this was the most useful way to examine a religious community in the past.[58]

The idea of including social behaviour in analysis of historical religious groups presents a number of problems and opportunities for the historian. For religious minorities like Catholics living in the English state, information about their patterns of worship and social expression of their faith was often unrecorded by members of the group and is only known to historians because it was observed by an outsider or by the authorities. In these circumstances it is imperative that historians attempt to distinguish the authors' often anti-Catholic interpretation of the rituals from the actual actions themselves. A further problem presented by this approach is the need to understand the deeper motivating factors that lay behind these behaviours, and their wider social implications for the community and the rest of society. The limitations of Bossy's approach in developing this kind of deeper understanding can be seen in his assertion that early modern Catholicism was 'a complex of social practices rather

[57] J. Bossy, 'The Character of Elizabethan Catholicism', *PP*, 21, 1962, pp. 39-59.
[58] Idem, *The English Catholic Community, 1570-1850* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1975) p. 108.

than a religion of internal conviction'.[59] This conclusion seems inevitable given that he chose to concentrate his analysis on ritual without deeper consideration of the meaning that lies behind these social expressions of religious culture. As a result of his adoption of this position, Bossy did not always consider the cognitive or affective reasons that underpinned and were influenced by these ritual behaviours, instead proposing a functional interpretation. For Bossy, Catholicism amongst the social elite enhanced authoritarian influence over household servants, including clergy and dependents, while it was followed by the lower orders because it provided a clear social calendar marking the turning of the seasons and rites of passage.[60]

In order to develop a more intellectually satisfying understanding of the social, cultural and psychological experiences of early modern Welsh Catholics there is a need to engage with a more interdisciplinary discussion of this topic. This thesis will seek to examine Catholics as a religious minority located within a wider Protestant society. This approach will consider the role of prejudice and tolerance as forces that shaped Catholics' relations with each other and with other religious groups in the region. It would seem that there has been a general failure amongst historians to develop full understanding of the nature of the prejudice faced by Catholics during the early modern period. While it has been observed by a number of British historians that anti-Catholicism became an integral part of national politics and culture in the post-Reformation era, the nature of anti-Catholicism as a prejudice and its effect upon the Catholic community have yet to be fully explored. This is particularly noticeable in the Welsh historiography.

[59] Idem, "Character of Elizabethan Catholicism", p. 41.
[60] Ibid, p. 39.

In this thesis, a number of social psychological theories will be examined, along with their implications for our historical understanding of anti-Catholicism as a prejudice and its effect on the community it targeted. The use of research from other disciplines raises a number of considerations for the historian. Primary among these is the applicability of theories tested in modern societies to those in the past. Psychohistory has been widely and rightly criticised for its use of psychoanalytical theories in developing an understanding of the motives and experiences of historical figures.[61] It is, therefore, imperative that the problems and benefits of the use of empirically tested theories are examined in detail.

This thesis will also consider the way in which the Catholic communities that existed across Wales developed in the later seventeenth century. In chapter two, I will discuss the way in which members of these communities could become connected on several social levels, while also considering the degree to which social unity could also be disrupted by the fear of persecution. The importance of the concept of community, its formation and meaning to its members has been highlighted by Lisa McClain, who has suggested that it played a significant role in shaping Catholic identity.[62] However, these issues have not been examined in a Welsh context. Furthermore, there has been no attempt to apply the wide-ranging and prominent research of social psychologists into the way in which identity, community and intergroup relations influence each other. Consideration of these questions will be the focus of chapters four and five. These chapters will examine the nature of identity generally in the Catholic community, before examining how shared identity could be created by and reinforced through the surprisingly varied religious culture that

[61] T. G. Ashplant, "Fantasy, Narrative, Event: Psychoanalysis and History", *HWJ*, 21, 1986, pp. 167-8; F. Weinstein, "Psychohistory and the Crisis of the Social Sciences", *HT*, Vol. 34, No. 4, Dec., 1995, pp. 299-319.
[62] McClain, *Lest We Be Damned*, pp. 250-289.

continued to flourish amongst Wales' Catholics throughout the seventeenth century. The final chapters of this thesis will comprise two case studies focusing on clerical and lay identity in the community located on the southern Welsh Marches. These examinations will suggest a more sophisticated understanding than has previously been proposed of how Catholics formed a distinct religious minority in Welsh culture, but were not isolated from the society that surrounded them. These chapters will also acknowledge that Catholics' conception of themselves, their expression of their religious identity along with their family and social lives, were profoundly influenced by the patterns of tolerance and persecution that they experienced.

While consideration of questions of identity and community within the context of early modern Catholicism present new ways of understanding how ideas like sameness and difference were conceived of in the early modern period, they all present significant technical difficulties. One of the problems faced by historians seeking to examine these aspects of Catholic culture and society is the nature and extent of the evidence that the community has left behind. In the context of Welsh Catholicism this problem is particularly acute. No historian of the seventeenth century can expect a perfect written record of life in the past, particularly when attempting to explore the more interiorised aspects of individual's lives. However, it would seem that Welsh Catholics of the later seventeenth century are particularly sparsely represented in the historical record.

The lack of illuminating collections of family papers, diary entries or a consistent recording in official records has meant that much of Welsh Catholic history is drawn from a fundamentally limited body of surveys, letters and printed material that have survived. Many explanations can be proposed for the failure of a wide range of documents to survive to the modern day. Chief amongst these must be inevitable

consequences of the criminalisation and social demonisation of many aspects of Catholic life. Like many social groups whose behaviour is designated as deviant, Catholics living in early modern Wales naturally appear to have sought to protect their religious identity from scrutiny, and in doing so have left only a limited body of written evidence to be scrutinised by historians. The evidence produced by Catholics themselves which is referred to in this thesis has been carefully collected through consultation of the caches of documents found in the collections of the National Museum of Wales, local archives in Wales and England and archives of Lambeth Palace and the British Library. Unsurprisingly, the majority of Catholic documents relating to the Principality are held in Welsh archives and were produced by gentry and middling families living across the region. Despite the limited nature of this evidence, it has provided a tantalising glimpse into the experiences of a social group that was undergoing significant change in the period following the Restoration. The documents referred to in this thesis consist of wills, letters, domestic papers and written biographical accounts that have been preserved in the collections left behind by a few Catholic families and individuals. Most of these families lived in the south-eastern corner of Wales, in the Catholic heartland that ran along the Marches.[63] However, biographical descriptions do survive from two Catholics living in the north-eastern part of the country, illuminating the lives of middling Catholics in Denbighshire and Montgomeryshire.

As well as documenting the familial relationships and patterns of conformity and recusancy that existed within the community, other archival material details more mundane aspects of everyday life in rural communities and towns, and the social interaction between Catholics and their Protestant neighbours. These sources inform

[63] Jenkins, "Anti-popery on the Welsh Marches", pp. 276-277

historians about how this social community functioned in late seventeenth-century Wales, and have been used in this thesis to help extend historical understanding of the wider social, political and cultural context in which these individuals lived.

While the lives of Catholics may not appear regularly in manuscripts of the period, the conflicts that arose between them and their Protestant neighbours at various points in the late seventeenth century were widely discussed in the burgeoning print culture of the day. The debate over Catholic activities in this relatively remote corner of the country in the newsletters, pamphlets and broadsides produced by London's presses, occurred sporadically during the second half of the 1600s. The product of faction, political ambition and sectarian division, these documents provide a different view into Catholic life to that which is depicted in the patchy manuscript evidence. These documents speak of how members of the Catholic community were depicted by those who were frightened and angered by their perceived strength in Stuart Britain, and also the way that some members of the community sought to influence and shape public perception to their own ends. Most strikingly these documents are a reflection of an intriguing confluence of national anxiety and local crisis which created significant political upheaval that some have seen as a continuation of the conflicts of the Civil Wars.[64]

The limitations of Catholic representation in archives of this period, has meant that those historians that have studied this aspect of Welsh history have tended to focus on the same narrow range of source material. This contrasts with the kinds of evidence that has supported discussion of the lives of Catholics in other regions of the British Isles and even other Welsh religious communities. Given that the late seventeenth-

[64] N. Key and J. Ward, "'Divided into parties': Exclusion Crisis origins in Monmouth", *EHR*, 115, 464, 2000, p.1170.

century state had maintained Anglicanism as the official religion of the realm for over a century, it would be unrealistic to expect the records describing the religious lives of those attending the Established Church to be replicated to similar extent for Catholics. However, in other regions of Britain the activities of Catholics were well documented in reports produced from a variety of official sources. The destruction of sites used by Catholics to worship, concerned surveillance of known recusant families and the results of raids on homes suspected of harbouring priests and smuggling Catholic books and objects, all contribute to our understanding of Catholic culture and life in Britain.[65] In parts of England where Catholic populations attracted the authorities' attention, their activities have been preserved for historians' scrutiny.[66] However, in Wales the same kinds of record keeping do not seem to have occurred or have not survived to the same extent.

Documents produced by the Catholic missionaries themselves also seem to be in scant supply. This was not only hindered by Catholics attempts to hide their religion, but also by the fact that the records of the Western province were lost when the building housing them were destroyed by fire in 1780.[67] In Wales, documentary evidence from Catholics does exist to describe the universal and more mundane aspects of their lives. Letters regarding debts and shopping expenses, as well as wills and land deeds have survived to the present day.[68] However, these deal with the effects and implications of the religion only rarely. Overt descriptions of worship, belief and

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[65] Walsham, *Charitable Hatred, passim.*
[66] A. Whiteman (ed.), *The Compton Census of 1676: A Critical Edition* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1986) *passim*; A. Walsham, *Church Papists: Catholicism, Conformity and Confessional Polemic in Early Modern England* (Woodbridge, Boydell Press, 1993) p. 76.
[67] This fire seems to have come as part of a wave of anti-Catholic rioting afflicting London, Bath and Bristol, which were sparked by the pronouncements of Lord George Gordon as head of the Protestant Alliance; [67]Jenkins, "'A Welsh Lancashire'?, p. 176.
[68] Abergavenny Museum, Gunter MSS 22A and A/44-6; NLW, Welsh Probate Records, MS BR/1680/2 1680; NLW, Milborne MS 37.

culture in Catholic communities in Wales tended to have survived in manuscript or printed forms from periods of particular tension rather than times of peace.[69]

This might be the expected state of historical material for a community that was a religious minority and a persecuted one at that. However, the fact that this narrow evidence base is a particularly prominent feature of the community in Wales, does seem suggestive of other factors that have influenced the creation and preservation of these kinds of documents. Wales' religious make-up has been seen as a factor. The lack of widespread support for Anglicanism until relatively late in the Reformation, and the prominence of Catholics in the region's ruling elite for much of the seventeenth century, seems to have meant that there was little appetite for strict prosecution and examination of Welsh Catholics. On the other side of the confessional divide, the remoteness of Wales from metropolitan hubs, its sometimes inclement climate and geographical challenges all contributed to a failure by missionary priests to support and monitor local Catholic populations in a consistent manner. The dual linguistic heritage of the Welsh also plays a role in the history of the country's Catholics as it does in any other cultural group. While Catholic texts in Welsh were printed and copied for distribution amongst the community, these were produced at secret presses and were not as numerous as those rendered in the English language. The exposure of these secret presses in the Elizabethan period meant that the ability to print Welsh medium texts was massively curtailed, while the distribution network of Welsh-language manuscripts was not sufficient to meet the demand.[70]

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[69] For details of this conflict please see chapters four and six.

[70] One of the most important secret presses of the late sixteenth century operated in a cave in Little Orme. Other presses operated for a time in Brecon and Flintshire; G. Williams, *Renewal and Reformation: Wales c.1415-1642* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1987) p. 320. The motivation for creating these secret presses lay in the censorship that was imposed by the State. There has been some debate about the effectiveness of these measures. For details of this, see C. S. Clegg, *Press Censorship in Jacobean England* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004) pp. 1-19.

The combination of these factors has meant that historians of this aspect of seventeenth century Welsh history have encountered a particularly narrow documentary source base. For English-speaking historians, Welsh language material is often inaccessible. Furthermore, the vast majority of discussion of Catholic behaviour, identity and community in archival and contemporary printed material are dominated by representations drawn from Protestants who were opposed to any growth (real or imagined) in Catholic interests at a local or national level. In her discussions of the changing relationship between sacred space and Catholic culture, Walsham often utilises republished and secondary accounts of Welsh Catholic behaviour in contrast to those that form the basis of her discussion of Scottish, Irish and English Catholics.[71] Similarly, the assertions made regarding the flexible religious identity of both the Protestant and Catholic communities of Monmouthshire in Jenkins' study, appear to be based on a narrow body of archival and printed material.[72] It is important to note that this is not a criticism of these historians' work, but merely a reflection of the nature of the source material available.

The aim of this thesis is to try and move beyond the shadowy figures that appear in the manuscript record, and the martyrs and caricature bogeymen of the printed political propaganda, to explore how a community on the geographical and social borders lived during such changing times. This was not an easy task given the limitations of the manuscript record and the partiality of the printed accounts from both sides of the confessional divide. In order to overcome the limitations of this body of evidence, it has been necessary to consider a wider variety of source material than simply that found in English and Welsh archives. In mapping the social, economic

[71] A. Walsham, *Reformation of the Landscape* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2011) pp. 96, 101, 104-106.
[72] Jenkins, "Anti-popery on the Welsh Marches", p. 286-293.

and political connections between Welsh Catholics it was essential to consider the degree to which such relationships were driven by familial as well as cultural or political factors. Genealogical records of the various middling and gentry families that made up the wealthier levels of Catholic society used in this thesis have been gathered from a number of different sources. A considerable amount of information regarding the kinship of various Catholic families in Monmouthshire was supplied through the research of antiquarians and historians of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Both J. H. Canning and J. A. Bradley described the intermarriages of families in Monmouthshire, while in North Wales, the kin network of the Mostyn family of Talacre were recorded in the heraldic and antiquarian texts produced by John Burke and J. Y. W. Morris.[73]

For historians seeking to examine these connections, the mapping of family networks can prove difficult. While the histories of noble families like the Somersets of Raglan are easily and extensively documented, the kinship patterns of the lesser gentry and professional classes are more fragmented. In Monmouthshire, Canning and Bradley collected information from both parish records and the tombstones that remained in the county's churchyards in the 1910s and 1920s.[74] One of the major difficulties faced by historians in documenting the kinship patterns of more obscure historical families, is the changing nature of the evidence available to them. One example of this is the difficulty faced by Canning and Bradley in tracing the connections between the Lewis and Gunter families in Abergavenny. The confusing

[73] NLW, Joseph Herbert Canning, MSS 16-17; J. A. Bradney, *The history of Monmouthshire from the coming of the Normans into Wales down to the present time*, Vol. 1 (London, Mitchell, Hughes and Clarke, 1907) pp. 14, 39, 41, 126; J. Burke, *A Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Commoners of Great Britain and Ireland Enjoying Territorial Possessions or High Official Rank; but Uninvested with Heritable Honors*, Vol. 2 (London, R. Bentley, 1834-1838) p. 163; J. Y. W. Lloyd, *The History of the Princes, the Lords Marcher and the Ancient Nobility of Powis Fodog and the Ancient Lords of Arwystli, Cedewen and Meirionydd*, Vol. 4 (London, T. Richards, 1881-1887) p. 160.
[74] NLW, Joseph Herbert Canning, MS1, p. 122 and MS14.

mixing of generations that resulted from an inability to distinguish between three generations of male heirs all with the same name, could only be properly resolved by consulting the cache of documents that was uncovered in the Gunter mansion in 1912.[75] While historians of Monmouthshire were subsequently aware of the documents, their implications for the Gunters' family tree were perhaps not initially recognised. Similarly, historians of late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries do not have access to the records of stone memorials found in the churchyards of Wales. The removal of historic headstones to make way for redevelopment of land, and the simple problem of erosion from exposure, has meant that historians cannot consult them in the same fashion as those studying these families 90 or 100 years earlier.

In my study of the genealogies of some of the more significant Catholic families of this period, I compared the patterns of birth, marriage and death identified in these nineteenth and twentieth century histories with the researches of local historians of the mid-twentieth century, and found that the identifications made in these later studies were supported by the archival evidence that has survived.[76] However, a more complex picture of the religious affiliations and practices within both recusant and conformist families has emerged than has been acknowledged by the early twentieth-century historians. Some of these points challenged the arguments about the nature of the Welsh Catholic community that have been propounded over the last 30 years.

As well as considering the implications of genealogical evidence for our understanding of Welsh Catholicism, I also sought to re-examine the key assumptions

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[75] Abergavenny Museum, Gunter MSS 22A and A/44-61.
[76] Ibid; NLW, Milborne MS 37; NLW, Joseph Herbert Canning, MSS 16-17; Bradney, *The history of Monmouthshire*, Vol. 1, pp. 14, 39, 41, 126; Burke, *A Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Commoners of Great Britain and Ireland*, Vol. 2, p. 163; Lloyd, *The History of the Princes*, Vol. 4, p. 160.

that have been made about the importance and meaning of the more ritualised aspects of Catholic worship.[77] Contemporary accounts provided by Welsh Anglicans made clear allegations that in parts of South and North Wales, pilgrimage, veneration of the saints and worship at ancient landmarks remained part of the religious lives of many Catholics.[78] The existence of these sacred sites are well documented. However, their importance within Catholic worship in the post-Reformation era has been questioned. Outside the prominent shrine to St Winifred at Holywell, small local wells and holy mountains had been labelled as the sites where superstitious pseudo-Christian practices were observed. The evidence of what was occurring at these sites in the later seventeenth century was ambiguous in nature and went a long way in explaining why previously they had been dismissed as the products of pre-Christian rather than pre-Reformation cultural survivals. Similarly, the view that the Tridentine doctrines that were promoted by missionary priests Protestant and re-Catholicised regions of Europe have been seen as hostile to any aspect of religious worship that could be labelled superstitious. In such an environment it would be difficult to see the tying of rags in holy trees and deposition of pin offerings that were found in Wales as manifestations of Catholic belief.

However, as this understanding of Tridentine Catholicism and the teachings and attitudes of the missions have been challenged, the position of the kinds of activities described in Wales within the spectrum of Catholic worship is now also due for reassessment. In order to do this, I visited some of the sacred spaces that remain in South Wales and sought to expand the evidence base through consideration of their geography and pattern of use. I also examined the degree to which the practices that

[77] Scribner, *Popular Culture and Popular Movements in Reformation Germany*, pp. 17-49; R. Hutton, "The English Reformation and the Evidence of Folklore", *Past and Present*, 148, 1995, pp. 81-93;
[78] Walsham, *Reformation of the Landscape*, p. 95-96, 103, 105-106.

had been dismissed as folk religion by some historians resembled the religious culture of pre-Reformation and early modern eras. To my surprise I found that in a number of locations, distinctly Catholic forms of votive prayer and pilgrimage remained a living part of the community's relationship with these beautiful spaces, drawing a line of faith from the medieval past to the twenty-first century.[79]

The fact that all the primary reports of Catholic worship at these sites were drawn either from the prejudiced descriptions of opposing Protestants, or from the hagiography and propaganda of missionaries and controversialists, raises serious questions about the meaning and even the accuracy of what is described. As a result, it was necessary to seek an alternative point of comparison against which to examine the accuracy of some of these claims. I used photographic evidence to document the geographical surroundings of these shrines and landmarks, as well as to record the continued existence of religious rituals that echoed the traditions that had long been associated with pilgrimage and saint veneration in Christian Europe generally. It may be questioned as to whether photographic records of these sites are useful in discussing the nature of the religious community that utilised them over 300 years earlier. The vast changes wrought in the Welsh countryside by industrialisation as well as natural processes, means that the original landscape that surrounded these holy wells and mountains may have been radically altered. For chapels set within urban areas, these changes are even more pronounced.

However, while acknowledging these difficulties, careful observation of the landscape, accounting for demographic, social and natural change, can suggest key points at which the modern world and that which has gone before still intersect.

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[79] E. Badone and S. R. Roseman, "Approaches to the Anthropology of Pilgrimage and Tourism", in Idem (eds.) *Intersecting Journeys: The Anthropology of Pilgrimage and Tourism* (Champaign, University of Illinois, 2004) pp. 1-23; F.T. Noonan, *The Road to Jerusalem: Pilgrimage and Travel in the Age of Discovery* (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007) pp. 235-251.

Consideration of land use, early modern transportation patterns, the distribution of surviving housing around these sites and even the nature of the objects left at these shrines, are all important elements that historians need to consider when examining the accusations, assertions and claims left in the politicised pamphlets and books of this period.

As well as expanding the range of historical source material that can be used to interpret the evolution of Catholicism in this period, this study also sought to engage with new theoretical bases that could inform such analysis. Consideration of the manuscript, print and geographical evidence suggested that a significant change had occurred in the social behaviour of Catholics in the later seventeenth century. As will be detailed in chapters five and six of this thesis, the political interaction between Catholics in parts of Wales was markedly different in the post-Civil War era to that which characterised the community in the preceding decades. What emerges from the letters, pamphlets and reports of the era was a community that retained key features of earlier centuries, while also facing a need to adapt socially, politically and culturally in a period of rapid change. In exploring these questions of formation of identity, social interaction and influence, and interpersonal perception, an interdisciplinary approach was necessary.

While historians researching all periods of history have utilised some form of interdisciplinary research, some attempts to inform historical study with ideas and theories from other disciplines have proved controversial and particularly difficult. Attempts to incorporate psychological theories and perspectives into discussion of the motives, feelings and behaviour of historical figures and groups, have exemplified many of the problems that have arisen in trying to apply the findings of social scientists to past societies. However, the use of psychology by historians has also shown the

great benefits that can be achieved in trying to create a full, in-depth picture of the lives of historical individuals.[80]

It is important to recognise that the application of psychological theories to the past has not always produced successful and convincing arguments. However, the approaches utilised and applied by psychohistorians have been rather limited and, I would suggest, inappropriate. Since the first arguments for the application of psychology were made by Langer over 50 years ago, psychoanalysis has dominated the field of psychohistory. Langer talked of the 'prodigious impact of psychoanalytic doctrine on many, not to say most, fields of human study and expression'. He saw it as 'a dominant influence in psychiatry, in abnormal psychology, and in personality study'.[81] Despite the increased profile of behaviourism and the challenges being made to psychoanalytical theory by psychologists in the late 1950s, Langer argued that psychoanalysis alone of the psychological theories could aid historical inquiry. He saw what he described as 'classical or academic psychology', as having 'little bearing on historical problems'.[82]

This focus upon psychoanalytical theories had a clearly discernible effect upon the development of psychohistory, as historians focused on the psychic tensions and processes that characterised individual historical figures and social phenomena in the past. Psychoanalytical theories were perhaps most interestingly applied to the history of sexuality, childhood and the family, and in individual historical biographies.[83] Attempts have also been made to move beyond these aspects of human experience that

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[80] J. Bourke, "Fear and Anxiety: Writing about Emotion in Modern History", *HWJ*, 55, 2003, pp. 121-2.
[81] W. L. Langer, "The Next Assignment", *AHR*, 63, 2, 1958, p. 285.
[82] Ibid, p. 284.
[83] E. H. Erikson, *Young Man Luther: A Study in Psychoanalysis and History* (London, Faber and Faber, 1958); P. Loewenberg, *Decoding the Past: The Psychohistorical Approach*, (New York, Knopf, 1983 (1969)) pp. 97-204; M. Roper, "Between Manliness and Masculinity: The "War Generation" and the Psychology of Fear in Britain, 1914-1950", *JBS*, 44, 2005, pp. 343-62.

are explicitly linked to the psychosexual and developmental theories of psychoanalysis, to explore other cultural and social aspects of the past. Such studies have tended to focus on the most extreme aspects of human behaviour in history – witch-trials, the excesses of the Nazi regime, medieval and early modern cults, and fervent religious devotion.[84] Psychohistorians have endeavoured to uncover some of the motives for the brutal and barbaric actions that accompanied such outbursts of religious and political fanaticism. However, despite its popularity during the 1970s and 1980s, when it was thought that psychohistory might become an influential sub-discipline within the field, the limitations of psychoanalytical history became increasingly apparent during the 1990s. By the turn of the millennium, many aspects of psychohistory had come under fire for the apparent lack of an evidential basis for many claims, and their reductionism.[85]

The use of psychoanalysis by historians demonstrates the difficulties of attempting to harness the explanatory power of theories from other academic fields. The psychoanalytical approach is not without controversy. In 1958, Langer talked of historians overcoming 'the initial resistance to the recognition of unconscious, irrational forces in human nature'.[86] However, the term "subconscious", as Freud used it and some other psychoanalysts have continued to understand it, is not accepted by all psychologists. While the work of Freud and the psychoanalysts that he inspired

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[84] Loewenberg, *Decoding the Past,* pp. 205-280; L. Roper, "Witchcraft and Fantasy in Early Modern Germany", *HWJ*, 32, 1, 1991, pp. 19-43; Idem, *Oedipus and the Devil: Witchcraft, Religion and Sexuality in Early Modern Europe* (London, Routledge, 1994); Idem, "'Evil Imaginings and Fantasies': Child-Witches and the End of the Witch Craze", *PP*, 167, 2000, pp. 107-139; M. Roper, "Re-remembering the Soldier Hero: the Psychic and Social Construction of Memory in Personal Narratives of the Great War", *HWJ*, 50, 2000, pp. 181-204; Idem, "Splitting in Unsent Letters: Writing as a Social Practice and a Psychological Activity", *SH*, 26, 3, 2001, pp. 318-39; J. Demos, *Entertaining Satan: Witchcraft and the Culture of Early New England* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1982).

[85] F. Weinstein and G. M. Platt, "History and Theory: The Question of Psychoanalysis", *JIH*, vol. 2, no. 4, 1972, pp. 419-434; Idem, "The Coming Crisis in Psychohistory", *JMH*, 47, 2, 1975, 202-228; F. Weinstein, "Psychohistory and the Crisis of the Social Sciences", *HT*, 34, 4, 1995, pp. 299-319;

[86] Langer, "The Next Assignment", p. 285.

made undoubted contributions in the quest to uncover the motives and reasoning that lay behind the most fundamental aspects of people's lives, their work has now been surpassed by modern, experimental psychology. Many aspects of psychoanalytical theory have been criticised for the distinct lack of empirical evidence to support many of its basic claims about the nature of the personality or development in children and young adults. The 'academic or classical psychology' identified by Langer as having very little to contribute to historical inquiry, has continued to develop as a scientific means of understanding the mind and behaviour, and has had a profound influence on contemporary psychological science.[87] Behaviourist theories, as they were in Langer's time, have become incorporated within the more nuanced and sophisticated field of cognitive-behavioural psychology, whose empirically-tested theories have influenced so much of our understanding of ourselves as individuals and as social beings. Psychoanalytical history demonstrates that interdisciplinary explanations of the past are fraught with difficulty. They require the development and refinement of our skills as historians, as well as the application of theories from outside of the historical tradition, in such a way as to both respect the views of other fields, and create a credible, insightful and appropriate account of the past.

It would seem that psychohistory's reliance on psychoanalytical theories has led to it creating more questions than it has actually answered, but these questions raise some important and interesting points about the nature of historical inquiry. Roper draws our attention to the way in which historians address questions of emotion and psychology in past societies and what can, cannot and should be studied in the past.[88] She asks 'whether and how there is a history of mind and emotion', and asserts

[87] Ibid, p. 284.
[88] Roper, "Witchcraft and Fantasy in Early Modern Germany", p. 37.

that historians need to acknowledge the existence of and consider 'primary areas of attachment and conflict'.[89] The notion of 'primary areas' of psychological experience seems to present the greatest challenge in the development of a balanced and full account of life in the past.[90] While no historian would deny that people in the past had as complex emotional and psychological lives as those in the present, accessing and describing these experiences, and identifying their effect on wider political, cultural and social events has seemed extremely difficult. The development of emotionology as a field for historical enquiry has contributed significantly to our understanding of emotion and emotional standards in the past, but the problem of whether and how historians can study the emotional experiences of historical figures and groups, have proved enduring problems.

In their influential article on emotionology, Peter and Carol Stearns called for the clear and rigorous distinction of emotional experience from emotionology, and asserted that historians cannot use 'contemporary psychology to elucidate past behaviour'.[91] However, as Bourke has pointed out, even historians like the Stearns, who reject modern psychology as a means of explaining the past, often slip into using psychological terms, discussing ideas of conditioning and the subconscious 'legacy of infancy'.[92] Bourke has argued that historians have struggled to acknowledge and analyse the emotional aspects of the individuals and groups that they study, suggesting that it results from the wider trend in the social sciences to disembody emotions, and portray them as the 'trivial by-products of rational, class-based responses to material

[89] Ibid.
[90] Ibid
[91] P. N. Stearns and C. Z. Stearns, "Emotionology: Clarifying the History of Emotions and Emotional Standards", *AHR*, 90, 4, 1985, p. 814.
[92] Bourke, "Fear and Anxiety", p. 115; C. Z. Stearns and P. N. Stearns, *Anger: The Struggle for Emotional Control in America's History*, 1986, University of Chicago, Chicago, p. 219.

interests'.[93] As a result, reasonable behaviour became the focus of historical inquiry, while those parts of human conduct which were unexplainable within this model were labelled as irrational and side-lined. Bourke argues that the product of this focus on the rationality of humans was that historians, even when considering clear examples of terror, panic and hatred, have been 'keen to impose a sober, dispassionate logic (often of an economic nature) on human behaviour'.[94]

I would suggest that the apparent impenetrability of the emotional and psychological lives of individuals in the past has been further compounded by the failure of history as a discipline to engage with modern psychological theory. Historians have commonly relied upon a "common-sense" or intuitive approach to the behaviour of individuals and groups. Roper argues that this approach has only limited usefulness because it cannot account for the underlying feelings that motivate some human behaviour.[95] Furthermore, I would suggest that an intuitive approach to emotional and psychological aspects of the past risks fundamentally misunderstanding the nature of the complex psychological processes that can underlie even the most basic aspects of personality, perception, memory and identity. Roper argues that a 'common-sense' approach to understanding the past risks overlooking the 'irrational' and 'unconscious' feelings and conflicts that can create tension and hostility.[96] However, I would argue that the use of terms like "irrational" and "hysterical" risk yet again applying labels to behaviour that does not match our own culturally and temporally bound standards of reason. The description of certain events in the past or the motivations of individuals as "irrational" seems inappropriate, subjective, and fails to provide any insight into the underlying processes that caused individuals to act as

[93] Bourke, "Fear and Anxiety", 121.
[94] Ibid, p. 122.
[95] Roper, "Witchcraft and Fantasy in Early Modern Germany", pp. 37-8.
[96] Ibid

they did. It would seem that the label of "irrational" is often applied to the most odious and morally repugnant aspects of past societies - the mass witch-hunts of Europe and New England, the pogroms carried out against any number of different subordinate groups in many cultures in all eras and the genocides carried of the modern era. These events are all characterised by morally reprehensible, irresponsible or destructive behaviour. However, in labelling them as "irrational", it would seem that historians avoid addressing the most difficult and disquieting aspects of humanity's history, and the disturbing possibility that such behaviours are an all too common part of human nature. Furthermore, such labels place these behaviours beyond the realms of historical explanation. By examining them in the light of scientific enquiry historians can scrutinise the mutability of even the most innate aspects of human nature.

Furthermore, the application of psychological theory to the study of the past provides new ways of improving our understanding of key social concepts and political events. Some early modern communities seem prime candidates for the application of psychology to inform and develop our understanding of their lives as individuals acting within a wider social world. Generally, Puritans tended to produce individual accounts that document their religious, social and mental worlds in a significant amount of detail.[97] The literate culture that was encouraged generally in Protestantism, but particularly amongst groups like Presbyterians, Baptists and Quakers, meant that such individuals were far more likely to write about their experiences and read about those of their fellows.[98] The survival of these kinds of

[97] P. S. Seaver, *Wallington's World: A Puritan Artisan in Seventeenth-Century London* (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1983) p. 82; J. S. Graham, *Puritan Family Life: The Diary of Samuel Sewall* (Lebanon, NH, Northeastern University Press, 2000) p. 13; R. W. Brockway, *A Wonderful Work of God: Puritanism and the Great Awakening* (London, Associated University Presses, 2003) p. 68.

[98] D. Cressy, *Literacy and the Social Order: Reading and Writing in Tudor and Stuart England* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1980) p. 3.

documents in the form of diaries, personal correspondence, newsletters and printed narratives, has meant that historians also have access to these important descriptive accounts of people's inner lives.

It might appear that Welsh Catholics, by contrast, would be a group less suited to this kind of study. While both Puritans and Catholics were both subjected to persecution by the State, Catholics seem to have not produced the kind of personal accounts that exist in the archives of Puritan material. This may be a reflection of the linguistic differences that were unique to Wales, or the lower general rates of literacy.[99] However, it would also seem significant that Catholicism as a religious culture placed less emphasis upon the written word as an expression of religious faith and of experiencing the Divine. It might appear that in this apparent desert of documentary evidence, those wishing to apply psychological insight to the history of Welsh Catholicism would struggle. However, I would suggest that such a view represents a fundamental misunderstanding of the kind of evidence that has survived, the way in psychology provides such insights, and, perhaps most importantly, its power as a tool of historical investigation.

While Welsh Catholics may have been reluctant or incapable of writing down their own personal, religious and emotional insights for each other and future generations, they are not absent from the historical record or opaque to examination. Their testimonies in trials and interrogations have survived, as have the hostile descriptions of their behaviours and lifestyles. In some respects, these accounts are as important as the small amounts of individual self-examination that are available. By moving beyond psychoanalytical theories, and instead utilising the concepts and experimental results of cognitive-behavioural psychology, historians can scrutinise

[99] Cressy, "Levels of Illiteracy in England, 1530-1730", p. 13

this evidence, revealing new understanding of how Catholics lived as individuals and coexisted with each other and their Protestant neighbours. The link between cognition, emotion and behaviour that has been established by cognitive-behavioural psychology means that the documentation of behaviour in an historical group can provide important evidence of their cognitive and affective experiences.[100] These may otherwise be missed by intuitive examination of group members' own testimonies. Such an approach provides historians with a fresh means of examining the effects of social concepts like prejudice, inequality and identity even amongst groups that have been marginalised or excluded from the dominant culture of the period.

The degree to which Catholics in Wales lived in a socially ambivalent position seems to have had an intriguing effect upon how individuals and the community as a whole functioned within their wider social world. From the evidence that has survived across the British Isles, it has emerged that they were a group that formed distinct political and social alliances that sometimes crossed class boundaries, were closely intermarried and employed one other to protect the interests of the community.[101] In some parts of Wales, male Catholics and conformists achieved positions of considerable power and influence in local government, despite their religious unorthodoxy. Catholic women often continued to worship independently within the Roman orthodoxy even if their husbands were nominally Anglican, and their predominance in many Catholic families at all levels of society, marked them out as distinct from their Protestant neighbours.[102] It was noted in a number of complaints

[100] D. Meichenbaum, *Cognitive-Behaviour Modification: An Integrative Approach* (New York, Plenum Press, 1977) p. 215-228.
[101] P. Jenkins, "Anti-popery on the Welsh Marches", *HJ*, Vol. 23, No. 2, 1980, pp. 277-9; P. Jenkins, "'A Welsh Lancashire'? Monmouthshire Catholics in the Eighteenth Century", *RH*, 15, 1980, p. 180.
[102] Jenkins, "Anti-popery on the Welsh Marches", p. 278; A. Walsham, *Church Papists: Catholicism, Conformity and Confessional Polemic in Early Modern England* (Woodbridge, Boydell Press, 1993) pp. 78-80.

made to Parliament that, in some areas, women sheltered priests at their homes and were protected by their Catholic and conformist male relatives.[103] Similarly, statistical data collected in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries would suggest that, even in periods of decline, the Catholic community was distinctly female in nature.[104] Clearly, this was a community that differed both socially and culturally from their Protestant neighbours, and requires deeper investigation of how this discrete group developed and co-existed within early modern Welsh society.

Of particular importance when considering the role that psychological theory can play in enhancing historical understanding of early modern Catholics, is the degree to which these individuals and communities were forging their distinct religious, political and social identity against a background of significant persecution and discrimination. It could be argued that one the most striking features of early modern society in the British Isles was the degree to which it was pervaded by institutionalised prejudice towards any number of diverse social groups. Women, Jews, Nonconformists, Catholics, the poor and the diseased all received casual criticism and general distrust, while some were also victims of periodic outbursts of extreme and brutal persecution. These prejudices were expressed in politics, art, literature and the popular press, suggesting the degree to which stereotypical images of the "other", and the emotions of fear, anger and disgust that accompanied them, fed into much of the culture of early modern England and Wales. Given the preponderance of this general prejudice and ill-informed hatred, the experience of Catholics might seem to be little

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[103] Sir John Trevor, *An Abstract Of Several Examinations Taken upon Oath, in the Counties of Monmouth and Hereford* (London, 1680), p. 18.
[104] NLW Tredegar 7, MSS 93/52-9; M. B. Rowlands, *English Catholics of Parish and Town, 1558-1778* (London. Catholic Record Society, 1999), p. 139; Idem, "Harbourers and housekeepers: Catholic women in England 1570-1720", in B. Kaplan, B. Moore, H. Van Nierop and J. Pollmann (eds), *Catholic Communities in Protestant States: Britain and the Netherlands c.1570-1720* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2009) pp. 200-215.

different to that of any other social group that was targeted in early modern society. Like other Christian denominations that operated outside of the Established Church, they were subject to legal proscription, political and cultural discrimination and periodic bouts of harassment and violence.

However, anti-popery appears to have been a particularly divisive prejudice in the early modern British Isles, exercising an astonishing influence upon the politics, religion and popular culture of these islands for much of the early modern period.[105] The political, social and religious divisions between Catholics and Protestants played such a significant role in the history of Britain that they left lasting scars on whole communities, their role in the bloody and destructive conflicts that raged in Ireland being perhaps the most extreme, but poignant example. The fact that the Catholic community in the British Isles is one of the oldest and most significant religious minorities in the country means that there is a long history of uneasy co-habitation and also antagonism. This shared history has meant that the Protestant and Catholic communities in various parts of the British Isles developed complicated relationships that effected not only their interaction with each other, but also their own group identities and intra-group relations. A full examination of the lives of early modern English and Welsh Catholics requires discussion of the nature of anti-popery because of its clear effect on the construction of the community's religious identity and self-concept. Catholic identity and culture was formed within an environment that could erupt into hostility, where persecutors could be neighbours, or, as in the case of some Welsh Catholics, their own family members.[106]

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[105] P. Lake, "Antipopery: the Structure of a Prejudice", in R. P. Cust and A. Hughes (eds), *Conflict in Early Stuart England: Studies in Religion and Politics, 1603-1642* (London, Longman, 1989) pp. 72-106; A. F. Marotti, *Catholicism and Anti-Catholicism in Early Modern English Texts* (Houndsmill, Macmillan, 1999).

[106] In the case of one Welsh priest who died as a result of the Popish Plot conflict in Monmouthshire, his persecutor was his own cousin.

The notion that the Catholic was somehow other, foreign or alien despite being native-born, even familiar, was a recurring theme in the anti-popish literature of the period. The quintessential "otherness" of Catholics meant that they were often associated with other subjugated and minority groups. The linking of Catholics with other vilified groups can be seen in the overt association of Catholicism with treason and allegiance to a foreign power. The publication of *Regnans in Excelsis*, the conspiracies that followed, and the power and aggression of France and Spain, associated Catholics with xenophobic fears of malevolent influence from the Continent.[107] The loyalty of Catholics to the Pope over all secular authorities was seen as evidence of their disloyalty to their own head of state. As a result, Catholics were placed in the position of being vilified by the own compatriots as traitors.

Catholicism was also linked with the feminine in anti-popish literature and cheap prints.[108] Dolan has suggested that the marriage of successive Stuart monarchs to Catholic queens and the relocation of Catholic sacred space within the domestic sphere, contributed to the apparent "otherness" of Catholicism for many Protestant males. The large proportion of female Catholics and the apparent foreignness of the women's bodies and minds to early modern patriarchal society, meant that Catholicism could easily be associated with the feminine, feeding misogyny into the diatribes against Catholicism.[109] Furthermore, the essential femininity of Catholicism was seen as indicative of the superstitious and fundamentally misleading nature of the Roman Church. The relationship between priests and the women who sheltered them

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[107] C. Z. Wiener, "The Beleaguered Isle: A Study of Elizabethan and Jacobean Anti-Catholicism", *Past and* Present, 51, 1971, 27-62; P. Lake and M. C. Questier, *The Anti-Christ's Lewd Hat: Protestants, Papists and Players in Post-Reformation England* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2002) pp. 286-297, 300-302; T. Clayton, *Europe and the Making of England, 1660-1760* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007) pp. 192-219.

[108] F. E. Dolan, *Whores of Babylon: Catholicism, gender, and Seventeenth-Century Print Culture*, 1999; F. E. Dolan, Gender and the "Lost" Spaces of Catholicism', *JIH*, Vol. 32, No. 4, 2002, pp. 643-4; F. E. Dolan, "Why are Nuns Funny?", *HLQ*, 70, 4, 2007, 514-5.

[109] Dolan, Gender and the "Lost" Spaces of Catholicism', pp. 643-4, 648-52.

and the mystique of the nunnery provided opportunities for Protestants to project misogynistic fantasy and ideology onto the lives of Catholic women. [110]

The stereotypical image of the Catholic, which associated them with the foreigner, the traitor and the treacherous superstitious female, reflected a grain of reality from which a whole series of bigoted notions could be developed. Some Catholics of the sixteenth century had been involved in treasonous plots, giving their loyalty to foreign powers and the Papacy over their monarch. It was also the case that Catholicism was a religion that had a strong female following, with women maintaining theirs and their family's allegiance to Rome when their husbands were politically and socially unable. These facts were distorted in anti-popery and deeply affected relations between Catholics and Protestants at both a local and national level. They permeated all aspects of English and Welsh society – the society in which Catholics had to live, while remaining to some extent separate and isolated.

The fact that anti-popery seems to have been fed by, and fed into, other contemporary discrimination against women, Nonconformists and foreigners, is indicative of the fact that anti-popery is a fully developed prejudice and needs to be analysed as such. Historians have provided extensive discussion of the nature of anti-popery, its ideological imagery and the extent of its influence within early modern England.[111] However, there has been little explicit discussion of anti-Catholicism as a prejudice, with a social scientific understanding, and the full social psychological implications of prejudice within sixteenth and seventeenth century communities. Despite referring to anti-popery as a prejudice in the title of his 1989 essay and

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[110] Ibid, pp. 652-3; Dolan, "Why are Nuns Funny?", pp. 513-5.

[111] C. Z. Wiener, "The Beleaguered Isle: A Study of Elizabethan and Jacobean Anti-Catholicism", *Past and* Present, 51, 1971, 27-62; R. Clifton, "Popular Fear of Catholics During the English Revolution", *Past and Present*, 52, 1971, pp. 23-55; Jenkins, "Anti-popery on the Welsh Marches", pp. 275-93; Lake, "Antipopery: the Structure of a Prejudice", pp. 72-106; Marotti, *Catholicism and Anti-Catholicism in Early Modern English Texts*; Dolan, "Why are Nuns Funny?", pp. 513-5.

providing extensive analysis of the construction of Catholic stereotypes, Peter Lake does not discuss the nature of prejudice or the psychological effect it has on group identity.[112] Clearly, the culture, politics and social practices of Catholics were shaped by the hostility that they faced to varying degrees throughout the early modern era. As a result, there is a need to develop a full and rigorous consideration of the way in which Catholics lived in these conditions, and how anti-popery effected the formation of a distinct Catholic identity.

It could be argued that questions about Catholic demography, social identity, relations with Protestants, culture and politics, have already been covered fully in existing studies.[113] However, it is also important to recognise that in discussing these issues, historians are engaging with complex social phenomena that have clear emotional and psychological implications for individual Catholics. Study of this kind of intergroup behaviour, prejudice and the development of group identity should point firmly towards an interdisciplinary approach to research. These areas have been widely researched and examined by psychologists, who have revealed the complexity of the psychological processes that underlie these social phenomena.[114] In order to

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[112] Lake, "Antipopery: the Structure of a Prejudice", pp. 72-106.

[113] Scribner, *Popular Culture and Popular Movements in Reformation Germany*; Walsham, *Church Papists*; Dolan, 'Gender and the "Lost" Spaces of Catholicism' pp. 641-665; Rowlands, *English Catholics of Parish and Town, 1558-1778;* McClain, 'Without Church, Cathedral, or Shrine', pp. 381-399; Walsham, 'Miracles and the Counter-Reformation Mission to England', pp. 779-815; Spicer and Hamilton (ed.), *Defining the holy*; McClain, *Lest We Be Damned*; A. Walsham, *Charitable Hatred: Tolerance and intolerance in England, 1500-1700* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2006)

[114] C. Hovland and R. R. Sears, "Minor Studies in Aggression: Correlation of Lynchings with Economic Indices", *JP*, 9, 1940, pp. 301-10; T.W. Adorno, E, Frenkel-Brunswick, D. J. Levinson and R. N. Sanford, *The Authoritarian Personality* (New York, Harper, 1950); M. Sherif, O. J. Harvey, B. J. White, W. R. Hood and C. W. Sherif, *The Robbers Cave Experiment: Intergroup Conflict and Cooperation* (Middletown, Wesleyan University Press, 1988 [1961]); H. Tajfel, M. G. Billig, R. P. Bundy and C. Flaument, "Social Categorization and Intergroup Behaviour", *EJSP*, 1, 2, 1971, PP. 149-78; H. Tajfel, "Cognitive Aspects of Prejudice", *JSI*, 25, 4, pp. 79-97; Idem, "Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations", *ARP*, 33, 1982, pp. 1-39; H. Tajfel and J. C. Turner, "The Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Behaviour", in W. G. Austin and S. Worchel, *Psychology of Intergroup Relations* (Chicago, Nelson-Hall, 1986) pp. 7-24; R. Brown, "Intergroup Relations", in M. Hewstone, W. Stroebe, G. M. Stephenson, *Introduction to Social Psychology: The European Perspective*, 2nd Ed. (Oxford, Blackwell, 1996) pp. 530-561.

explore these elements of the Catholic experience to their fullest extent, the historian needs to engage with this research and develop a more academically rigorous and accurate portrayal of the social, cultural and psychological elements of Catholic life.

There is a tendency in some the historical studies of anti-popery and its effects on Protestant and Catholic culture, to suggest that this kind of ingrained prejudice amongst historical cultures is "irrational". Our modern moral discomfort with prejudice can, perhaps, account for this lack of deeper consideration. Such views are also clear in historians' studies of anti-popery in late seventeenth-century Britain, and the Oates Plot of 1678-80 more specifically. Despite the considerable amount of attention it has received, the explanations that have been proposed for the popular appeal, effect and longevity of anti-popery, have yet to explain how anti-popery effected relations between Catholics and Protestants, why outbursts of violence were sporadic, and the effect of this hostile social climate on Catholics.[115] By identifying and analysing anti-popery as a prejudice, historians can begin to consider the potent effect of an in-group/out-group mentality on ordinary Catholic men and women. Apparently "irrational" behaviour, such as the ultimate sacrifice made by martyrs to the Catholic cause, and the willingness of so many men and women to leave family, friends and all that was familiar, to live in émigré communities on the Continent, seems rather more understandable and reasonable. The Oates Plot and its effect in towns and villages across the country is a clear example of how the label of "mass hysteria" has hampered attempts to explain how neighbours, even family members, could be savagely divided by prejudice and bigotry. Historians have found it difficult to explain why the violence erupted and how local religious tensions were exacerbated

[115] J. Scott, *England's Troubles: Seventeenth-Century English Political Instability in European Context* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000) p. 56.

by the panic over Oates' inconsistent, false accusations. The label of "mass hysteria" has been applied as a means of explaining why reasonable people believed so readily what was ultimately shown to be a complete fabrication, produced by a group of conmen and petty crooks. By removing this convenient but unhelpful label, historians can develop a new understanding of how mutual distrust and fear could divide communities, and form strong religious identities and social bonds that crossed class boundaries.

The use of social psychological theories may seem a logical means of aiding analysis of the divisive relationship between some elements within the Protestant and Catholic communities in the early modern era. However, I will suggest that this kind of interdisciplinary approach to history could provide a means by which historians can begin to discuss the long-term impact of social and cultural trends upon individuals and groups in the past. It has been suggested that it is extremely difficult for historians to access the emotional and cognitive state of people in the past. The barriers of time and place, as well as the scarcity of detailed discussion of thoughts and feelings in all but a few historical records from the early modern period, seem to make any understanding of their interior lives a near impossibility. However, the scrutiny of behaviour that is evident in accounts documented by those working in aid of the state and by private individuals describing themselves and others, present a body of evidence that has not previously been considered as a behavioural record. The importance of behaviour as an indicator of the affective and cognitive states of individuals in particular circumstances has been suggested by extensive psychological research. With a record of individuals' behaviour, historians can begin to interrogate this evidence for the information that it can provide on the more interior aspects of

people's lives, through the use of empirically tested psychological theory. Such an approach would introduce the possibility of exploring hitherto hidden aspects of historical experience in a manner that is consistent with the academically rigorous methods and higher levels of validity that are rightly expected of modern academic research in all fields.

This thesis will propose that the application of empirically tested social psychological theory can help to answer many of the challenging questions raised by the rapidly changing fortunes of the Catholic community generally, and Welsh Catholics specifically, in the years 1660-1700. How did the community sustain itself in the face of rabid and persistent persecution? How did they succeed in increasing their numbers after the catastrophe of the Civil War and the conversion of the marquess of Worcester? What was the nature of Catholic identity? What was the role played by priests and community leaders in sustaining the population? Full answers to these questions demand engagement with the emotional experiences of individuals and consideration of the psychological processes that lay behind apparently "irrational" behaviour. My consideration of early modern Catholicism will engage with these deeper aspects of emotional life and the complex relationship that was established between individual Catholic identity and that of the wider social group. In order to do this, I will present a psychologically-informed view of the role played by sacred space and the physical landscape in developing and maintaining the Welsh Catholic community in times of strength and when under pressure. I will discuss the way that these ancient religious spaces helped them to maintain their connection to their faith and also locate their religious convictions at the centre of their emotional life. I will also demonstrate the usefulness of Social Identity Theory (SIT) and Realistic Conflict Theory (RCT) in developing our understanding of the relations

between Catholics and their Protestant neighbours, of the formation of a distinct Catholic social identity, and also to explain the way that individuals coped with the persecution they faced.

The study of the past will always be to some extent subjective in its conclusions. Hartley's oft quoted metaphor about the foreignness of the past conveys the degree to which historians are like travellers observing strange cultures, unable to communicate with the locals, but fascinated by their customs, belief systems and experiences.[116] In developing ever more nuanced and sophisticated understandings of the economic, political and cultural make-up of the early modern British Isles, historians have revealed the complexities of a social landscape that has faded into the past. It allows us not only to envisage a society that seems alien in so many ways, but also aids our understanding of how their world evolved and developed into our own. However, it is of paramount importance that historians remember that politics, trade and belief systems are human constructs, built by people acting as individuals and in-groups. Such groups were held together by emotional bonds and psychological processes that historians have yet to explore. By not considering these factors, historians can only sketch an image of the past, which is devoid of colour and detail. It recreates a human landscape, but leaves out the humanity. Crucial details about the motives and experiences of individuals are missed, and our explanations of historical events lack sufficient depth. In order to address these problems we must tackle difficult questions about the nature of identity, social relationships and the perception and awareness of "the other". However, we must analyse these complex issues with an enquiring mind, and interrogate both the explanatory power of the theories we seek to apply and the plausibility of the answer we derive.

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[116] L. P. Hartley, *The Go-Between*, 2000 (1953), Penguin Books, London, p. 17.

Chapter Two
Separate, but not separated: the structure and nature of the Catholic communities of Wales

Since the reign of Elizabeth, the religious unorthodoxy of Wales had been recognised, with members of both the political elite in Wales and London suggesting that it represented a threat to the security of the realm. In 1587, the radical Puritan, John Penry, wrote to the Queen and Parliament requesting assistance in the evangelising of 'the most barren corner of the land'.[1] It was alleged that Catholic practices, traditional Celtic culture and even a tendency towards atheism were threatening to undermine godly religion amongst the Welsh. The presence of a long-standing and nationally significant Catholic population provoked many sporadic, and generally unsuccessful, attempts to encourage Protestant evangelism.[2]

Contemporary explanations of the persistence of Catholicism in Wales suggested it was evidence of the superstition and ignorance of the people.[3] While such views were coloured by the inherent anti-Catholicism of Protestant English and Welsh society, they were also indicative of the concern inspired by a substantial, concentrated Catholic population. In the politically charged environment of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the existence of a large Catholic minority in the peripheral regions of the British Isles was seen by some as a possible area of weakness in English defences against the Catholic forces in Ireland and on the Continent.[4]

As conflict erupted in the mid-seventeenth century within the three kingdoms, the course of the Civil War in Wales highlighted both the inherent conservatism of the

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[1] J. E. C. Hill, "Puritanism and 'the dark corners of the land'", *TRHS*, 13, 1963, pp. 78-9.
[2] Ibid, pp. 81-3.
[3] Hill, "Puritanism and 'the dark corners of the land'", pp. 81-2; G. H. Jenkins, *The Foundation of Modern Wales, 1642-1780* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1993) p. 43.
[4] McCoog notes that both Morys Clynnog and Robert Parsons reported to their superiors in Rome on the suitability of Wales as a site for invasion by Catholic forces; Thomas M. McCoog, "The Society of Jesus in Wales; The Welsh in the Society of Jesus: 1561-1625", *JWRH*, 5, 1997, pp. 2, 20.

Welsh gentry, and the power of the major landowning magnates – the Herbert families of Pembroke and Powis, and the Somersets of Monmouthshire. The power sharing of these three families was complicated by their differing religious views. Henry Somerset, created marquess of Worcester by Charles I to reward his financial support of the crown, and the Herberts, Barons Powis, were both staunchly Catholic.[5] These two families supported and protected large Catholic populations in Welsh and English counties, while the Herberts, earls of Pembroke, had embraced Protestantism since the Reformation, and patronised members of the Anglican gentry across South Wales.

However, with the fall of Raglan Castle, seat of the Somersets, and the victory of the Parliamentary forces, the distribution of political power shifted. These changes had a significant effect on the lives of both Catholics and Protestants living in the Principality, as the region took many decades to form an amicable political balance. In the aftermath of the Civil War and Interregnum, Wales remained a religiously mixed region, with a significant Catholic population in some areas. Catholics could be found at all levels of society and flourished in both market towns and rural hamlets, coexisting with the Anglican majority and the newly emerging Baptists and Quakers.

However, this religious diversity did not translate into peaceful co-existence. The events of the later seventeenth century shed light on both the nature of the Catholic community and its complex relationship with other religious groups in Wales. Ironically, it is the anti-Catholic reports, pamphlets, and surveys that purported to uncover supposed plots against the Stuart monarchy and Parliament, or warned of the

[5] The Herbert family was divided into those living AT Powis Castle under the title Barons Powis, and those living under the title the earls of Pembroke, occupying Wilton House in Wiltshire. Both families traced their ancestry back to William Herbert, the first earl of Pembroke, but followed very different religious paths. By the 1640s, Philip Herbert, the fourth earl, showed marked favour towards godly Protestantism and was sympathetic towards Puritanism. In contrast, Percy Herbert, the second Baron Powis, was a recusant Catholic. See Herbert family tree in Appendix A for further detail. J. K. Knight, "'From the Welsh Good Lord Deliver Me': Soldiers, Papists and Civilians in Civil War Monmouthshire", *AC*, 151, 2002, p. 4.

threat of invasion from the Jacobite claimants that provide considerable insight into the nature of Wales' Catholic community. Such documents illuminate the clerical and secular networks that existed in Wales in this period.[6] They suggest a well-established community of Catholics that engaged in a variety of religious activities and acted co-operatively to protect and support each other.

The relationships between Catholics, maintained by intermarriage, patronage, communal worship and protection, mirror the patterns of adaptation and evolution that have been identified in other post-Reformation Catholic communities throughout the British Isles.[7] While maintaining an identity and lifestyle that was distinctive and compatible with the teachings of the Tridentine Church, Catholics also had to adjust to their changing political and social fortunes. In this environment bonds of kinship, patronage and religious confraternity took on key importance, allowing Catholics to maintain their communities and identities during the tempestuous years of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Such communities also provided invaluable support for Catholic priests, while affording a means of distributing information between Catholics.[8]

The way in which Catholics constructed and developed a community during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries has been the subject of a number of studies. Debate has centred on both the extent of Catholic loyalty during the Reformation and

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[6] NLW Chirk Castle 1 Group B, MS 38 5/2; NLW Tredegar 7, MSS 93/52-56 and 93/58-59; NLW Church in Wales: Diocese of St Davids Episcopal 3, MSS SD/RC 1-20; Anon., *A letter from a gentleman in Glocestershire to his friend in London* (London, 1678); Herbert Croft, *A short narrative of the discovery of a college of Jesuits, at a place called the* Come (London, 1679); Sir John Trevor, *An abstract of several examinations taken under oath, in the counties of Monmouth and Hereford* (London, 1680); R. W., *A letter to an honourable Member of Parliament* (London, 1700).
[7] R. B. Manning, "Catholics and local office holding in Elizabethan Sussex", *HR*, 35, 1963; M. McClain, *Lest we be Damned: Practical Innovation and Lived Experience among Catholics in Protestant England, 1559-1642* (London, Routledge, 2004); R. Oates, "Catholicism, Conformity and the Community in the Elizabethan Diocese of Durham", *NH*, 43, 2006; J. E. Kelly, "Kinship and Religious Politics among Catholic Families in England, 1570–1640", *History*, 94, 2009.
[8] McClain, *Lest we be Damned*, pp. 250-1; Trevor, *An abstract of several examinations*, pp. 2-10.

the following centuries, and the way in which such communities continued to exist as the establishment of a Protestant state religion became increasingly ingrained.[9] The degree to which Catholic communities had become paternalistically organised, politically controlled and supported, has also been subject to considerable discussion.[10] While much of the historiography has rightly focused on the means by which Catholics collectively sought to protect themselves against the anti-popish persecution, important points about how Catholics and Protestants lived together peaceably have also been made.[11] However, much of this more nuanced and developed understanding of the structure and nature of the Catholic community has not been applied in a Welsh context.[12]

This chapter will consider how we define a 'religious community' in the early modern period and how this can be applied to the analysis of Welsh Catholicism. It will examine the social, political and cultural structure of Catholicism in Wales and the Marches. Catholicism's uneven geographical distribution across the Principality will be outlined, and some tentative explanations of this pattern of loyalty to the Roman Church will be suggested. This chapter will also examine the degree to which bonds of patronage, kinship and shared patterns of worship acted to maintain social relationships between Catholics. Given the eruption and subsidence of anti-popish prejudice in parts of Wales in this period, it is important also to consider the differing

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[9] J. Bossy, *The English Catholic Community, 1570-1850*, (London, Darton, Longman and Todd, 1975) pp. 97-100; P. Jenkins, "'A Welsh Lancashire'? Monmouthshire Catholics in the Eighteenth Century", *RH*, 15, 1980, p. 176.
[10] J. Bossy, 'The Character of Elizabethan Catholicism', *PP*, 21, 1962, pp. 39-41
[11] A. Walsham, *Charitable Hatred: Tolerance and Intolerance in England, 1500-1700*, (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2006).
[12] Bossy, "The Character of Elizabethan Catholicism", *passim*; Idem, *The English Catholic Community,* passim; A. Walsham, *Church papists: Catholicism, Conformity and Confessional Polemic in Early Modern England*, (Woodbridge, Boydell Press, 1993); M. B. Rowlands (ed.), *English Catholics of Parish and Town, 1558-1778* (London, Catholic Record Society, 1999); C. Haigh, "Catholicism in Early Modern England: Bossy and Beyond", *HJ*, 45, 2, 2002; J. K. Knight, "A Nonconformity of the Gentry? Catholic Recusancy in Seventeenth-century Abergavenny", *MA*, 20, 2004; McClain, *Lest we be Damned*, pp. 233-268.

ways that Catholic communities dealt with challenges and changes to their religious freedoms. As one of the largest groupings of Catholics in the British Isles, a detailed examination of the communities in this region is crucial to the development of a clear picture of how Catholicism continued to flourish in certain areas long after the creation of a firmly Protestant state and Church. Such an investigation contributes towards a greater understanding of the way in which economic, political and cultural concerns interacted and overlapped in early modern Welsh society. Most importantly, there is a need to consider how Catholics utilised ancient bonds and forged new links to ensure the continued existence of their faith in a world that vacillated between sporadic, violent persecution and peaceful co-existence.

It is imperative when discussing the patterns of worship, political life and cohesion of a particular social group, that the notion of a community is clearly defined at the outset. The concept of community is complex and is closely bound with questions of belonging, social cohesion and bonding. While understanding the nature of community in early modern England is fundamental to the effective analysis of how society functioned at that time, the complexity of the concept has made it difficult to define, let alone investigate. Community can be understood as describing the social grouping created through the bonds of kinship, social hierarchy, employment and shared cultural practices of its members.[13] It is important to note that one population can form multiple communities, distinguished by geographical proximity, particular

[13] Bossy, "The Character of Elizabethan Catholicism", pp. 39-40; Idem, *The English Catholic Community*, p. 5; C. Haigh, 'The Fall of a Church or the Rise of a Sect? Post-Reformation Catholicism in England', *Historical Journal*, Vol. 21, No. 1, 1978, p. 184; Walsham, *Church papists*, p. 65; Rowlands (ed.), *English Catholics of Parish and Town*, pp. 2-3; McClain, *Lest we be Damned*, pp. 4-11; Oates, "Catholicism, Conformity and the Community in the Elizabethan Diocese of Durham", pp. 60-61; Kelly, "Kinship and Religious Politics among Catholic Families in England, 1570–1640", pp. 329-331.

cultural activities or formal social bonds. Kinship, patronage and employment can all act to create a clearly delineated group that share a sense of community.[14] However, less formal connections can also act to link individuals. Social cohesion within the community can be reinforced through socialising, gift exchange, participation in ritual, hospitality, charity and remembrance in wills.[15]

When we consider the nature of community amongst the Catholic population of Wales, it is important to reflect upon the diversity of the different groupings which emerged in the community. McClain has made the crucial point that Catholics of post-Reformation England were not an homogenous mass. It is more valid to speak of the various Catholic communities that made up the population, rather than classifying a diverse group into one inaccurate social entity. She also rightly draws attention to the fluidity of the concept of community, and the degree to which the social boundaries of these groups overlapped. Individual Catholics may have been active participants in a variety of communities, reflecting the different forms of religious worship and participation available to them in their local areas.[16] Rather than viewing the Catholic communities of Wales as static groupings, they should be considered as overlapping, sharing multiple members, and defined in a variety of ways. The connections between communities are built through social, political and economic interactions, but do not necessarily result in close identification, or even mutual respect, between multiple communities.

This definition of a community is not exhaustive, but it allows for the development of a qualitative examination of the social, cultural, political and economic implications of this informal societal organisation. While the concept of community

[14] D. Cressy, "Kinship and Kin Interaction in Early Modern England", *PP*, 113, 1986, *passim*.
[15] F. Heal, "Food Gifts, the Household and the Politics of Exchange in Early Modern England", *PP*, 199, 2008, pp. 44-45.
[16] McClain, *Lest we be damned*, p. 234.

can be difficult to define, it has emerged as a major area of debate and discussion amongst historians of the early modern period. Questions have arisen over the nature and role of community as a means by which social relationships were maintained.[17] One of the most fundamental social networks that have been increasingly scrutinised by historians is the familial bonds between individuals. Increasingly, historians have begun to question the orthodox view that those below the gentry were far more isolated from their kin networks.[18] However, the rapid pace of social, cultural and economic development in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries transformed the traditional bonds, as well as patterns of employment and the division of power between the monarch, the aristocracy and the commons.[19]

As Britain and Ireland became religiously plural societies, new strains emerged as questions of conscience and allegiance took on important new social and political meanings. For historians of Catholicism, questions of what community was in the era of Protestant and Catholic Reformation and the roles it fulfilled, are particularly pertinent. Increasing interest has been shown in the way in which Catholicism moved from a Church of the majority to a sect of the minority, and has raised a number of interesting points about the nature of Catholic society. As the historiography of the English Reformation has developed a more nuanced approach to the emergence of a Protestant national Church, the changes occurring in English Catholic culture and society have also come under renewed scrutiny.[20] The concentration of Catholics in

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[17] Cressy, "Kinship and kin interaction in early modern England", p. 49. For the Catholic context of this debate, see Bossy, "The Character of Elizabethan Catholicism", pp. 39-40; Idem, *The English Catholic Community*, p. 5; C. Haigh, 'The Fall of a Church or the Rise of a Sect? Post-Reformation Catholicism in England', *Historical Journal*, Vol. 21, No. 1, 1978, p. 184; McClain, *Lest we be Damned*, pp. 4-11

[18] Cressy, "Kinship and kin interaction in early modern England", pp. 43-44.

[19] Ibid. p. 40.

[20] Bossy, "The Character of Elizabethan Catholicism", pp. 39-59; Idem, *The English Catholic Community*, *passim*; C. Haigh, 'The Fall of a Church or the Rise of a Sect? Post-Reformation Catholicism in England', *HJ*, Vol. 21, No. 1, 1978, *passim*; C. Haigh, "From Monopoly to Minority: Catholicism in Early Modern England", *TRHS*, 31, 1981, *passim*; Haigh, "Catholicism in Early

particular geographical locations, differing access to communal worship and the continued legacy of pre-Reformation religious life meant that Catholic lifestyles could vary considerably across areas.

When examining the nature of community amongst Catholics living under Protestant rule, historians are faced with a number of intriguing, but thorny issues of identification. Amongst a group engaged in an illicit activity that often took place outside the precincts of the law, the issue of defining membership becomes more difficult. McClain has suggested that there is a need to recognise that Catholicism evolved considerably in this period. She asserts that a key part of the experiences of Catholics, particularly those below the level of the gentry, was the degree to which old practices handed down through generations continued to be part of religious life, while new ideas brought from the Continent were adapted to the needs of English Catholics.[21] Rather than judging membership of the Catholic community by religious standards that reflect modern perceptions of homogeneity or Continental religious practices, McClain argues for the accommodation of heterogeneous behaviours.[22] As a result, historians must broaden their definitions beyond simply including recusants or those able to regularly attend formal Mass in order to create a more representative and qualitatively sound understanding of who Catholics were.[23]

McClain's point that Catholics and their religion evolved considerably from their suppression under Elizabeth I to the post-Civil War era is of particular importance in developing a solid understanding of community membership. It is essential that a definition of membership of the Catholic community allows for the inclusion of a

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Modern England", 481-486; E. Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, (New Haven, Tale University Press, 1992); M. C. Questier, "What happened to English Catholicism after the English Reformation?", *History*, 85, 2000, pp. 28-32.

[21] McClain, *Lest we be damned*, pp. 5-6, 8, 10-11, 35-39.

[22] Ibid, pp. 6-7, 29-30.

[23] Ibid, pp. 6-7.

variety of groups. It could be argued that in defining who can be considered Catholic, focus should be maintained on individuals' relationship with discernibly Catholic worship as much as on their participation of non-participation in the Anglican Communion. A key group that formed a significant community within Catholicism were those that chose periodically to conform to the state's requirement that all attend worship in their parish church. However, the position of these "church papists" within the community can be ambiguous and difficult to analyse. Walsham has suggested that to ignore this group would be to underestimate Catholic sympathies in England. However, as she and others have pointed out, many different religious viewpoints have been deemed church popery. [24]

However, there has been little comment made about the practice in Wales. This is despite the fact that outwardly conforming individuals seem to have played a significant role in the development of Catholicism in the region.[25] The production of a wider and more representative definition of the members of Wales' Catholic communities does, however, present difficulties in accurately quantifying the target population. Yet, it offers a deeper understanding of what the Catholic communities were, and the variety of patterns of worship that were supported within them. It also highlights the various ways that Catholics in different parts of Wales sought to adapt their social and religious behaviour to allow them to participate in and influence regionally political and social life.

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[24] Walsham, *Church Papists*, pp. 73-5; Questier, "What happened to English Catholicism", p. 33.
[25] Many of the most prominent Catholic families were entirely recusant or contained recusants who have taken the lion's share of the historian's attention. However, many of these families also contained those who developed reputations as church papists and operated interesting divisions along lines of religious observance. J. M. Cleary, *The Catholic Recusancy of the Barlow family of Slebach in Pembrokeshire in the XVI and XVII Centuries*, (Cardiff, Newman Association, 1956), *passim*; Knight, "'From the Welsh Good Lord Deliver Me'", pp. 1-3; Idem, "A Nonconformity of the Gentry?", pp. 145-8; Jenkins, "Anti-popery on the Welsh Marches", p. 277.

As well as developing definitions of Catholics and their communities that are suitably representative of their experiences, it is also necessary to consider the geographical, demographic and social situations in which they lived. When considering the experiences of Welsh Catholics, the peculiarities of this more rural and remote area of the British Isles, need to be established. Throughout the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the uncultivated wildernesses that remained in England and Wales were increasingly being put to agricultural use. The economic life of the region continued to focus on the production of wool and dairy products, which were increasingly being traded directly with dealers in London.[26] The flannel industry had brought prosperity to many of the towns and cities of the border counties on both sides of the Marches.[27] Outside of these urban areas, small market towns provided the only other social centres in an otherwise rural region. The mountainous terrain of Wales meant that the authority of both the Crown and the Church was not felt with the same force as in more populous, lowland regions.[28]

In South Wales, the earls of Pembroke and marquesses of Worcester controlled most of the region. In Mid Wales, the marquess of Powis represented a significant force. It was the leadership of these interrelated families that had proved a decisive influence in Wales during the Civil Wars and the disputes that followed. These divisions also affected the political make-up of Welsh society in the aftermath of the war. Jenkins has argued that the splitting of the ruling classes into royalists and parliamentarians was more complex in Wales than in other regions. In England, moderate Anglicans might be expected to have been firmly royalist. However, this position proved difficult for this group to maintain in Wales given the Catholicism of

[26] Hill, "Puritanism and 'the dark corners of the land'", p. 77.
[27] Knight, "A Nonconformity of the Gentry?", pp. 145-147.
[28] Hill, "Puritanism and 'the dark corners of the land'", pp. 81-82.

Charles' chief supporter there - Henry Somerset (1577-1646), the first marquess of Worcester. These divisions seemed to widen as the war raged on.[29] Many of the moderate gentry refused to serve under Worcester's Catholic son, Edward (date unknown-1667), Lord Herbert, later earl of Glamorgan. The massive financial support this overtly Catholic family provided for the King, and Edward Somerset's role in negotiations to raise an Irish Catholic army, altered this delicate balance. Whether in response to concerns over the power that Worcester would achieve through a royalist victory, or simple political opportunism, many of the moderates joined Parliament's forces and were crucial in the collapse of royalist forces in Wales.[30]

It was in this physically rugged and politically tumultuous environment that Welsh Catholicism remained a feature of many families' lives throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Missionary priests had been arriving in Wales since the 1570s, with secular priests, Jesuits and Benedictines all attempting to sustain the lingering Catholicism they encountered, as well as seeking to convert new followers. A factor in the development of a strong Catholic community in Wales was the conversion to Protestantism of Henry Somerset (1629-1700), the fourth earl and first marquess of Worcester, and the subsequent connection of the Somersets to some of the most prestigious Catholic families. Despite this change of religion, the marquess of Worcester, along with the Catholic Barons Powis, continued to provide considerable support for Catholics living in Wales. The previous generation of the Somerset family had established a missionary centres on the Welsh border. The Barons Powis accommodated priests within their own house at Welshpool. Both families played a

[29] Jenkins, "Anti-popery on the Welsh Marches", p. 281; Knight, "'From the Welsh Good Lord Deliver Me'", p. 4.
[30] Ibid.

significant role in the maintenance of a large Welsh Catholic population into the mid-seventeenth century.

The geographical distribution of Catholicism through Wales highlights the importance of this aristocratic protection. The geographical distribution of Catholicism was far from even, with clear concentrations in the border counties. Significant communities existed in Monmouthshire, Breconshire and Flintshire, with more isolated groups of Catholics being found in Glamorgan, Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire, Montgomeryshire, Radnorshire and Denbighshire. The concentration of Catholics in the Marches was also reflected across the border in Herefordshire, Shropshire and Chester.[31]

Accurate statistical information on the numbers of Catholics living at any particular point in the early modern period is not easily discerned, and can create considerable problems when attempting to create an accurate picture of the size and nature of the community. The inconsistency of both the coverage of those surveys that do survive and the unreliable methodologies used to collect the results mean that such figures cannot be treated as a complete picture of demography of Catholicism. Rather they give an impression of the distribution of Catholicism within the population in certain areas. However, to utterly dismiss the use of such surveys would be to ignore some of the only evidence we have that can be used to understand the actual distribution of Catholics in the country, and interrogate some of the assertions that were being made by contemporary interested parties.

Consideration of the limited statistical information available suggests that the distribution pattern of Catholics across Wales was not equal, but concentrated in

[31] Jenkins, "Anti-popery on the Welsh Marches", p. 276; Idem, "'A Welsh Lancashire?' Monmouthshire Catholics in the Eighteenth Century", *RH*, 15, 3, 1980, pp. 176-188.

certain regions of the country. Nor was it stable. The Compton Census of 1676 listed 1102 Catholics in Wales, over 500 of whom were resident in Monmouthshire. The same survey underestimated the general population of the region by a half. This would suggest that the Catholic population was substantially larger.[32] However, in later years doubt has been cast on whether Catholicism remained as significant a force in Monmouthshire and Wales more generally. This is not helped by the lack of reliable statistical information for this group in the later seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Some sporadic reports were produced by local officials documenting the numbers of Catholics in Monmouthshire during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Surveys have survived for Monmouthshire and St Davids diocese from 1696 and 1706.[33] While no evidence survives of how this information was gathered or the criteria used to determine how Catholics were defined, they do provide interesting information from which tentative conclusions can be drawn regarding the demography and distribution of the community in the closing decade of the seventeenth century and early years of the eighteenth century.

Direct comparison of the statistics gathered in 1696 and 1706 is difficult due to the differences in the data that was collected. However, both surveys occurred at times of great tension for the Protestant governments. February 1696 saw an attempt by supporters of the exiled James II to assassinate William III, with a bid to invade the country by James' forces threatened only a month later.[34] The Jacobite threat lingered into the eighteenth century, even after the death of James II in 1701. The passing of the Regency Act in 1706, back dated to 1705, sought to secure the succession through Sophia, Electress of Hanover, keeping it from passing to the Catholic heirs of James

[32] Idem, "A Welsh Lancashire?", pp. 176-188.
[33] NLW MSS Tredegar 7, 93/52-56 and 93/58-59.
[34] C. R. Chapman, *Pre 1841 Censuses and Population Listings: In the British Isles* (1998, Lochin Publishing, Dursley) p. 28.

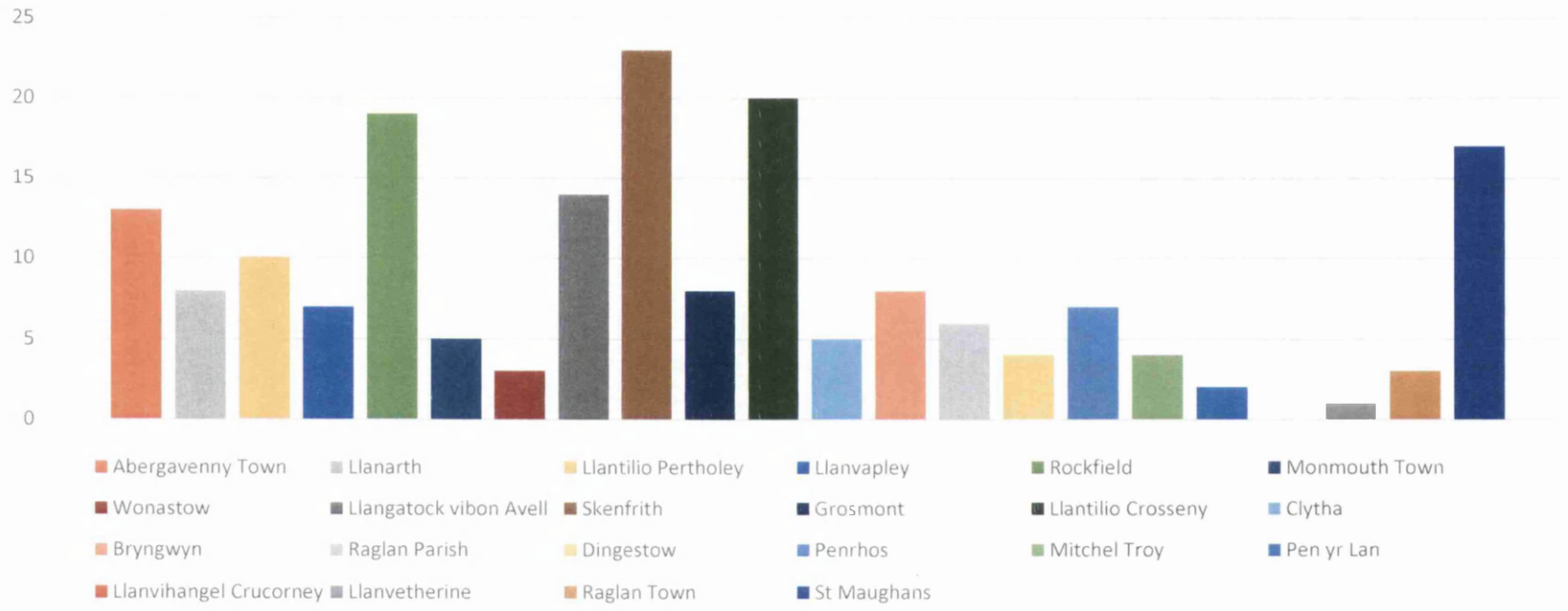

Fig. 1 Male and female Catholic population for towns and settlements in the heartland region in Monmouthshire as identified by Jenkins.[35] Population figures are for the year 1706.[36]

[35] Jenkins, "Anti-popery on the Welsh Marches", p. 277
[36] NLW MSS Tredegar 7 93/53-56, 93/59-58

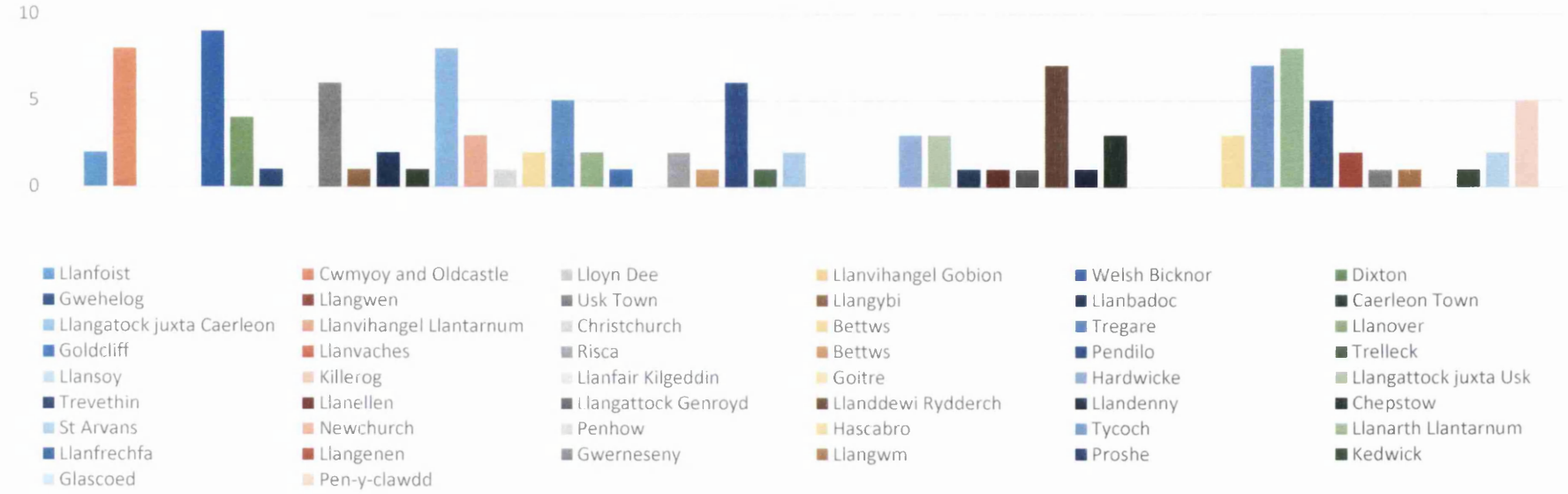

Fig. 2 – Males and female Catholic population for towns and settlements outside the heartland region in Monmouthshire as identified by Jenkins.[37] Population figures are for the year 1706.[38]

[37] Jenkins, "Anti-popery on the Welsh Marches", p. 277;
[38] NLW MSS Tredegar 7 93/53-56, 93/59-58

II.[39] It was in this tense political context that the government and the Church of England sought to keep a wary eye on the levels of Catholicism in the country.

Figures 1 and 2 show the total Catholic population for Monmouthshire based on the more complete data collected by churchwardens in 1706.[40] The survey information has been divided into two figures based on the geographical distribution of Catholics proposed by Jenkins and the towns, villages and settlements cited in the original manuscripts. Jenkins has suggested that a distinct Catholic heartland existed in Monmouthshire located in the area north of the road between Abergavenny and Monmouth, running upwards towards the Welsh-English border.[41] Jenkins examined the returns of the Compton Census to discern this heartland region.[42] However, he did not utilise the survey data that survived from 1706. Consideration of this data does appear to support this view that Catholics were concentrated in the north eastern area of the county with the largest concentrations of Catholics being found in the towns and villages of Abergavenny, Rockfield, Llangattock viben Avell, Skenfrith, Grosmont and St Maughans. However, large Catholic populations could be found outside this region. As figure 2 shows a sizeable population was also found at Welsh Bicknor, Llangattock juxta Caerleon and Llanarth Llantarnum, outside this heartland region. Importantly, all of the larger market towns and population centres of the county possessed significant Catholic populations, including Abergavenny, Monmouth and Caerleon. While it might be expected that Catholicism was weakened if not destroyed by the tumult of the various religious changes imposed by successive

39 *LJ*, Vol. 18, "28th February 1706", p. 130, accessed http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=29444, 11th August 2013; Ibid, Vol. 18, "14th March 1706", p. 154, accessed http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=29456, 11th August 2013;
[40] NLW MSS Tredegar 7 93/53-56, 93/59-58
[41] Jenkins, "Anti-popery on the Welsh Marches", p. 277
[42] A. Whiteman, *The Compton Census of 1676: A Critical Edition* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1986) pp. 517-520.

Tudor and Stuart monarchs, as well as the catastrophe of the Civil War, it would seem that the community remained an important population of several hundred individuals into the early eighteenth century.[43] While it is not possible to draw firm conclusions about the true size of the Catholic population in Monmouthshire from this material, the data does suggest a number of important points about the distribution of Catholics in this part of Wales and lends support to the views of Jenkins that the community was most noticeable in north-eastern Monmouthshire.[44] However, it also clearly suggests that Catholicism was a feature of religious culture throughout the county, with the community having some level of presence across the region into the eighteenth century.

The significance of the Catholic population listed in 1696 and 1706 are a marked contrast to the figures that have survived for other areas of South Wales. The reports compiled by the vicars of the parishes of St Davids' diocese reported only 17 Catholics living in West Wales in 1706.[45] This unequal population distribution evidenced in the data from Monmouthshire and St Davids diocese could be the product of different definitions of Catholicism, dissimilar data gathering or simple dishonesty on the part of those collecting the data in West Wales. However, these figures point towards the fact that Catholicism was concentrated in the Marches of Wales, reflecting the view that was prevalent at the time that Catholicism was a particular feature of some parts of the Principality.

Many different reasons have been proposed to explain these Catholic population clusters in Wales, ranging from religious backwardness to the dominance of noble Catholic families. One reason for the continued presence of Catholic

[43] NLW, Tredegar 7, MSS 93/52-56 and 93/58-59; NLW, Church in Wales: Diocese of St Davids Episcopal 3, MSS SD/RC1-20, NLW, Chirk Castle 1 Group B 38 5/2.
[44] Jenkins, "Anti-popery on the Welsh Marches", p. 277
[45] NLW Church in Wales: Diocese of St Davids Episcopal 3, MSS SD/RC 1-20.

communities in particular areas and their survival into the late seventeenth century seems related to the geography of the region. Both contemporary Catholic and Protestant commentators noted the slow progress of the Reformation and lingering support for Catholicism in Wales, which some related to the physical landscape of the Principality.[46] Protestant commentators emphasised the ignorance of the Welsh which they saw as a by-product of the poverty and lack of attention given to this area of the country.[47] This problem was exacerbated by the inadequacy of Welsh livings, which led to the employment of clergy who were often absent from their parishes. The large, rural parishes of Wales, particularly in upland regions, generated relatively modest incomes for the clergy. But the problem of the poverty of the livings was exacerbated by the fact that the Crown and the episcopacy often benefitted from these impropriations, leaving many parishes without access to a minister.[48] The poverty of the livings also seems to have affected the quality of the clergy that could be recruited to serve in Wales. High quality clerical candidates were unlikely to serve in the remoter and more difficult circumstances found in Wales, leading to poorly suited ministers holding posts in regions that could have benefitted from greater support.

The problem of corruption and immoral behaviour amongst the Welsh clergy does not seem to have dissipated by the late seventeenth century. An example of how long-term problems with members of the clergy could blight Welsh parishes can be seen in a simony case at Llansantffraidd brought to the attention of Archbishop Thomas Tenison in 1698. It was reported that a recent occupant of the living had been found to be ill-educated and was suspected of drunkenness and adultery.[49] Similar

[46] McCoog, "The Society of Jesus in Wales; pp. 2, 20; Hill, "Puritanism and 'the dark corners of the land'", pp. 81-84.
[47] Hill, "Puritanism and 'the dark corners of the land'", pp. 81-84.
[48] Ibid, pp. 88-89.
[49] LP, Miscellaneous Papers 1590-1714, MSS 930/44 and 46

complaints were still being made in 1703. An anonymous letter from a minister in Glamorgan to Archbishop Thomas Tenison, complained that the clergy selected to serve in Welsh parishes were unsuitable and could not communicate with their congregations because of their lack of knowledge of Welsh. The author noted that this was contributing significantly to 'the great decay of Learning and virtue amongst us'.[50] The anonymous clergyman suggested that this problem was exaggerated by the fact that the largest parishes were in the possession of the bishops. When the bishops had been able to preach in Welsh, this issue had been less pressing. However, the author complains that increasingly English clergy are being appointed to roles in the Welsh Church, leading to a breakdown in communication and neglect of the population.[51] In the mountainous regions like the Brecon Beacons, and in areas away from regional centres, greater scrutiny of religious behaviour could not be enforced, meaning that both Catholic and Protestant nonconformity flourished in the absence of a strong Established Church.

It has also been suggested that the unequal distribution of Catholics within Monmouthshire reflected the support and protection offered by the Somersets, earls and, later marquesses, of Worcester.[52] The fact that the heartland of Catholicism identified by Jenkins developed in central and northern Monmouthshire would also suggest the importance of the Somersets in supporting Catholicism in the towns and villages that surrounded their seat at Raglan.[53] However, in acknowledging the importance of aristocratic support in the development of the Catholic community in Wales, it should not be assumed that its existence was merely a by-product or legacy

[50] LP, Miscellaneous Papers 1590-1714, MS 930/33.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Jenkins, "Anti-popery on the Welsh Marches", pp.18-20; Bossy, *The English Catholic Community*, pp. 97-100.
[53] Jenkins, "Anti-popery on the Welsh Marches", p. 277

of the seigneurial bonds that developed in some parts of the British Isles. This would not explain the complete story of Wales' Catholic communities. These population clusters occurred in counties that lay on the borders of England and Wales, and sometimes on the borders between dioceses. It could be argued that the confusion that could be created at the boundaries of jurisdictions allowed for the initial survival of Catholicism beyond the Elizabethan settlement, and the subsequent development of a series of missionary-supported communities. The apparent lack of clear authority to control the activities of Catholics was exacerbated in some areas by the absence of Protestant leadership. The absenteeism of the Lords Bergavenny from their seat in Monmouthshire has been seen as providing some explanation of the high levels of Catholicism in that market town. As a result, a group of Catholic urban gentry emerged, practicing their religion with remarkable openness, infuriating members of the Anglican community.[54]

In order to understand the nature of Catholicism in Wales it is necessary not only to understand its geographical distribution, but also its social structure in this era. One of the key social divisions in the Catholic community was that between the laity and the clergy. In the 1670s, it has been estimated that the most Catholic region of Wales contained 541 people still loyal to the Roman Church. They were served by an estimated 15 priests, many of whom were Jesuits. Following the execution of many priests in the period of the Popish Plot, this number declined. At least 8 priests died in Monmouthshire, Herefordshire and Glamorgan, leaving a clerical population much depleted from its mid-century height of 19 men serving the community. It is this sense of the community as a declining force with an ever smaller number of priests, neglected in contrast to southern England, which has often been a significant element

[54] Knight, "A Nonconformity of the Gentry?", pp. 145-147.

in the historical analysis of the community in Wales. [55] There has always been the temptation when analysing the changing fortunes of Catholicism in any part of England and Wales to create a history of decline, depicting a story of plucky survival or of inevitable slow collapse in the face of growing Protestantism. While the rise of Protestant Dissenting sects as a major force in Welsh religious life is a well-known part of the region's history, it is important to also recognise that the seventeenth century was also a period of marked change and transition for Catholics. While decades following the persecutions of 1678-80 may have been marked by contraction in the Catholic population and a decline in the numbers of missionaries operating in the region, the preceding years seem to have been remarkably successful for the community. The establishment of missions in the north and south meant that Catholic communities across Wales could benefit from some access to priests and the sacraments of the Church. Priests travelled across South Wales, even in those counties that had few Catholics, while more permanent bases were established in the Marches.[56] It was these established mission centres that were to prove be a great strength to Catholics in this period, but also provoked considerable hostility.

The arrival in Wales of missionary priests trained in the Continental seminaries began in the 1570s and provided renewed access to the sacraments and services of the Church.[57] Seculars, Jesuits and Benedictines all arrived in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, serving communities in both North and South Wales. In North Wales, both the Jesuit and secular missions operated within the pilgrimage centre of Holywell, while the Jesuit mission in South Wales was based at the Cwm in

[55] Jenkins, "Anti-popery on the Welsh Marches", pp. 277-278.
[56] T. P. Ellis, *The Catholic Martyrs of Wales, 1535-1680* (London, Burns, Oates and Washborne, 1933) pp. 123-125; Jenkins, "Anti-popery on the Welsh Marches", pp. 277-278; M. R. Lewis, *From Darkness to Light: The Catholics of Breconshire 1536-1851* (Abertillery, The Old Bakehouse Publications, 1992), pp. 29-33.
[57] Lewis, *From Darkness to Light*, p. 18.

Herefordshire.[58] Priests were also housed at the home of the marquess of Powis and at various gentry and middling houses in Monmouthshire and Glamorgan.[59] Despite their limited numbers and unequal distribution across the country, the clergy remained an important part of Welsh Catholic society. When considering the significance and role of the Catholic clergy in the emergent communities of Wales, it is crucial to note the uniqueness of their position in Catholic society. As well as creating an important community of the ordained, these men were drawn from the families that formed the wider network of the laity. This is a clear example of how Catholics could belong to many cultural and social groups simultaneously.

In his analysis of the Welshmen who entered the Continental seminaries, Cleary has made the important observation that the returning missionaries were often drawn from the families of the lower gentry and yeomanry, rather than the wealthiest in the region. Amongst those priests that were apprehended and executed in North and South Wales can be found members of both urban and rural gentry, as well as men whose fathers had been professionals. The Lewises and Prichards of Monmouthshire were among the many families that contributed sons to the mission.[60] The fact that more modest Catholic families provided many of the seminarians from Wales is indicative of the mixing of those from more diverse social backgrounds within some areas of the clergy.[61]

While some missionary priests did choose to live in a more isolated fashion within the homes of the Catholic gentry, many chose to travel amongst a network of lay contacts and safe-houses ministering to Catholics along the way. This life-style

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[58] Seguin, "Cures and Controversy in Early Modern Wales", pp. 10-11; Croft, *A short narrative of the discovery of a college of Jesuits, passim.*
[59] Trevor, *An abstract of several examinations taken under oath,*
[60] Ellis, *The Catholic Martyrs of Wales*, pp. 123-140; A. H. Dodd,
[61] J. M. Cleary, *A Checklist of Welsh Students in the Seminaries, Part 1, 1568-1603*, (Cardiff, Newman Association, 1958), pp. 7-9.

brought these priests into contact with a much wider range of communities than might be expected. The degree to which some priests working within Catholic communities in South Wales maintained close relations with poor and wealthy Catholics has perhaps been overlooked. In the evidence presented by witnesses to the 1678 Parliamentary committee investigating Catholicism across the British Isles there were reports that the itinerant priests of the region were preaching in Welsh.[62] This is significant in that it suggests that these individuals at least were interacting with members of the monolingual Welsh-speaking community. While it cannot be argued that Welsh monolingualism was a marker of lower social standing, the inability to understand English does suggest a more localised experience and is not suggestive of membership of the professional or gentry levels of society. It is also important to note that it was reported that priests had frequented houses and performed Mass in a number of locations across central and eastern South Wales.[63] Given that the missionary centres were located on the eastern fringes of the region, the journeys that priests made to these safe houses and illicit Masses, must have involved considerable contact with a number of Catholics from across the region, not all of whom could have been wealthy.[64]

However, the clerical community in Wales was far from unified, with rivalry between seculars and Jesuits sometimes leading to shocking examples of betrayal and Machiavellian scheming. The clearest examples of this discord can be seen in the missions based at Holywell. Seguin has highlighted how the conflict centred on elite concerns that the well's capacity to generate wealth and prestige was maintained through competent clerical administration.[65] Surprisingly, the ensuing rivalry between

[62] Trevor, *An abstract of several examinations*, p. 6.
[63] Ibid, pp. 4-9
[64] Croft, *A short narrative of the discovery of a college of Jesuits*, pp. 3-4
[65] Seguin, "Cures and Controversy in Early Modern Wales", p. 13

seculars and Jesuits led some to exploit Protestant persecution in order to remove power from their rivals. As well as rivalry over access to the gentry's patronage, control of the shrine and the collection of alms, the divisions also focused on the perceived threat the behaviour of the Jesuits represented to the Catholic mission as a whole.[66] In the 1620s, controversy had arisen over the creation of a school at the seat of the Mostyns of Talacre at Greenfield, under the control of John Prichard.[67] This raised real fear amongst members of the secular clergy that the Jesuits risked drawing increasing and unwanted attention from the Protestant authorities to the activities taking place in the town. Complaints were made to Richard Blount, the Jesuit Provincial of England and Wales, and the school was eventually closed by John Mostyn in 1627.[68] However, this was not the end of the controversies. Further problems erupted in 1640 when John Mostyn's widow Ann, then married to George Petre, attempted to build an inn near the shrine. The sheriff arrived, demanding that building be halted as it was suspected that the inn was going to be used as a chapel and resort for pilgrims. It was revealed that a fellow Catholic had been the source of the rumours.[69] This dispute raged on until Ann Petre's death in 1669.

The suspicion and accusations that flew between the seculars and the Jesuits only worsened during the reign of James II. In 1686, relations between the two groups of priests had deteriorated significantly, with the Jesuits being unable to perform Mass in the shrine. When the king and queen visited the well in August of that year, the Jesuits were awarded £30 to maintain the chapel. However, the following year further disputes had arisen over who should control the shrine. Confusion had been created

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[66] Ibid, pp. 10-11
[67] NLW MS Martin Cleary Research Papers 7
[68] AAW MS, Series A, vol. XIX, no. 111, p. 391, transcribed in J. M. Cleary, "Recusant Schools in North Wales", *Worcestershire Recusant*, 32, 1978 p. 14
[69] Seguin, "Cures and Controversy in Early Modern Wales", pp. 13-14.

as the chapel had been gifted by James II to his queen following their pilgrimage. She indicated to Sir Roger Mostyn that she had presented the shrine to the Jesuits. The seculars refused to give up their control of the chapel, and the Jesuits broke into the building in order to take possession of it.[70]

This dispute between seculars and Jesuits at Holywell highlights the centrality of the small number of men that had arrived on the mission, to the life and peace of the Catholic communities they served. Despite their small numbers, these men occupied a crucial position, providing access to the sacraments, passing information from Mother Church to Catholics living in isolated areas and also providing links between their gentry patrons and the wider Catholic community. However, the rivalries and disputes of the various orders occupying the Continental seminaries and colleges were played out in the English and Welsh missions.[71] As a result, the gentry families that protected and provided for these missions were also dragged into the controversies and often contributed to them. Those families that supported the Jesuits and those who supported the seculars in Holywell played significant roles in their disputes. The Mostyn family provided the accommodation and support for the Jesuit school that caused considerable ire, while the Petres' attempts to support the Jesuits through construction of the Star Inn resulted in informants turning to the Protestant authorities.[72]

It would seem that the clergy of the Welsh mission were both products of and important elements within the communities of the region. They could act both as a unifying force and as a divisive component. The presence of multiple orders and

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[70] Ibid, p. 16.
[71] J. A. Nice, "Being 'British' in Rome: The Welsh at the English College, 1578-1574", *CHR*, 92, 1, 2002, pp. 3, 6-9; M. C. Questier, "What happened to English Catholicism after the English Reformation?", *History*, 85, 277, 2000, pp. 40-41.
[72] Seguin, "Cures and Controversy in Early Modern Wales", pp. 13-14

groups within the mission resulted in growing conflict in some areas, particularly at the mission base in North Wales. The need for support, both financial and physical, from the gentry meant that different groups of priests were sometimes brought into conflict with each other. The favouring of Jesuits over seculars, or vice versa, resulted in the gentry also playing an important role in the continuation and even the aggravation of these conflicts. While the worst excesses of the Archpriest Controversy and the Wisbech Stirs were nearly a century old when the dispute over the Star Inn flared in Holywell, it would seem that in North Wales at least, the rivalry between these missionary groups was still raw. While missionary priests provided important links between the Catholic Church and communities on the fringes of Christendom, they also brought with them the concerns and conflicts fostered many thousands of miles away.

Within the older historiography of Catholicism in Britain, the housing of clergy within the homes of the wealthiest Catholics has been seen as symptomatic of the social elite's cultural dominance within Catholic communities.[73] The importance of this group within the laity in the development and continuation of a political and religious culture can also be seen in the Catholic community in Wales. These important Catholic families were spread throughout the border counties of Wales, as well as the neighbouring counties of Glamorgan, Breconshire, Herefordshire, Shropshire and Cheshire. Linked through kinship, politics and culture these families occupied a central position within the Catholic communities of the region. One of the most important roles that these wealthy Catholics fulfilled was to provide a means of avoiding the worst persecution that the community faced. The presence of these

[73] Bossy, *The English Catholic Community*, pp. 126-127

higher status families suggests some explanation for the patterns of Catholic population distribution in particular areas of Wales.[74]

The Catholics of seventeenth-century Wales undoubtedly benefitted considerably from the fact that two of the most prestigious families in region - the Somersets and the Herberts of Powis Castle – were both committed Catholics for a considerable part of the century. The Somersets, based at Raglan, became notorious promoters and protectors of the Catholic laity and clergy in Monmouthshire, parts of Glamorgan and the English county of Herefordshire.[75] The point at which the male line of the Somerset family converted to Catholicism seems unclear. Dodd asserts that Edward Somerset (c.1550-1628) was a Catholic, but was loyal to the Crown and employed a Protestant tutor to educate his children.[76] In contrast, Croft is more tentative in her assessment, suggesting that Somerset was 'impeccably conformist'. However, she acknowledges that his wife was widely believed to be Catholic.[77] Despite the lack of clarity over when the family converted, it is known that priests had been sheltered at the castle since 1592, when Edward Somerset allowed the Jesuit superior Robert Jones to reside there. Edward's son, Henry (c.1577-1646), also supported many who were confirmed Catholics and those that would later convert, among them Hugh Owen of Gwenynog and Thomas Bayly. When he assumed the earldom, Henry went even further, contributing significantly to the creation of the Jesuit mission for South Wales and establishing Raglan as a centre of regional Catholicism.[78]

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[74] For details of the kinship networks of some of these families can be seen in appendices A-I.
[75] Jenkins, "Anti-popery on the Welsh Marches", pp. 280-281.
[76] A. H. Dodd, "The Somerset family, of Raglan, Chepstow, and Troy (Mon.), Crickhowell (Brecknock), Badminton (Glos.), etc", *DWB*, http://yba.llgc.org.uk/en/s-SOME-RAG-1450.html?query=somerset&field=content, accessed 21st September 2011.
[77] P. Croft, "Somerset, Edward, fourth earl of Worcester (*c.*1550–1628)", *ODNB*, http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/26005, accessed 21st September 2011
[78] McCoog, "The Society of Jesus in Wales; pp. 7, 13-14; Dodd, "The Somerset family".

Similar protection of both the clergy and the laity was provided in Mid Wales through the marquess of Powis. The Herberts of Powis Castle, descendants of Sir Edward (date unknown-1595), second son of William Herbert (c.1501-1570), first earl of Pembroke, had followed a similar pattern to the Somersets in that they were outwardly conforming during the initial years of the Reformation. Sir Edward Herbert's wife and children were listed as recusants in 1594, suggesting that he himself had leanings towards the Roman Church. This pattern of Catholic support and tutelage within the Herbert household continued through the first half of the seventeenth century under William Herbert (1573-1656), first baron Powis. However, towards the end of his life his faith became more pronounced.

His grandson took the family's commitment to Catholicism into a more public and overt realm. Regarded as one of the most important Catholic aristocrats of the period, William Herbert (c.1626-1696), third baron Powis, first earl and first marquis of Powis, was intermarried with the Somerset's of Raglan.[79] His religion and support of James II was to mark him out as one of the most controversial figures in the political turmoil of the era.[80] However, unlike his father-in-law, William Herbert does not seem to have been as evangelical in his attempts to influence the religious culture of the region, offering protection against recusancy legislation to local Catholics and Protestant non-conformists alike. While the Herberts of Powis Castle undoubtedly sheltered priests and nurtured Catholicism in Welshpool, it would seem that their relationship with the wider religious culture of the region was subtly different to that which could be found further south.[81]

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[79] V. Stater, "Herbert, William, styled first marquess of Powis and Jacobite first duke of Powis (c.1626–1696)", Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, *ODNB*, 2004, accessed at http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/13060, on 15th August 2013

[80] T. G. Holt S. J., "Jesuits of Montgomeryshire 1679-1873", *JWRH*, 4, 1996, p. 66

[81] Ibid, pp. 66, 68.

This protection and promotion of their co-religionists by these two families not only secured the existence of Welsh Catholicism into the late seventeenth century, but also shaped and fostered important political links between members of the Catholic community. In considering the variety of different kinds of connection that existed amongst Catholics in this period, it is important to recognise the structure of their political community.[82] The political network that existed amongst Catholics in Wales was clearly distinct from their Protestant counterparts, as Catholics were prevented from participating overtly in the public life of the country. The introduction of the Oath of Allegiance by the Tudors and the Oath of Supremacy by their Stuart successors, should have excluded any Catholic from holding office. This exclusion of Catholics from the Bench and other areas of civic society, would appear to suggest that Catholics were forced to exist in political isolation from and at the mercy of their Protestant compatriots. However, it would seem that this is not an entirely accurate picture. Local studies of Catholic communities in English counties have demonstrated how Catholics continued to occupy positions of considerable regional power despite their religious beliefs.[83] In his study of Elizabethan Sussex, Manning has shown that members of the Catholic gentry continued to occupy positions as JPs and sheriffs even during years of considerable anti-popish hostility from central government. It would seem that late seventeenth-century South Wales also operated with similarly surprising levels of Catholic participation in local government affairs.[84]

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[82] Accusations of protection, and even promotion of Catholic political interests, were a major feature of the accusations of conspiracy made by Sir Trevor Williams and John Arnold in the 1670s. *LJ*, Vol. 12, "10th March 1678", accessed at http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=12767, 17th February, 2010, pp. 449-452; *CJ*, Vol. 9, "29th April 1678", pp, 464-470, accessed at http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=27610, 17th February, 2010.

[83] Manning, "Catholics and Local Office Holding", *passim*; Oates, "Catholicism, Conformity and the Community, *passim*.

[84] Manning, "Catholics and Local Office Holding", pp. 45-61.

However, the presence of numerous Catholics, and those closely related to them, in these authoritative positions did not simply reflect remarkable local tolerance. It was the product of the intense regional rivalry between the Catholic faction supporting the political interests of the marquess of Worcester, and the Anglicans and Puritans who had formed an opposing faction. This bitter division in the political culture of South Wales played a crucial role in ensuring that Catholics were able to form a vital and significant political community in parts of Wales into the closing decades of the seventeenth century. The activities of this politicised community are clearly visible in Monmouthshire, where political disputes between Catholic and Protestant gentry families became particularly vicious in the late seventeenth century.[85] The Somerset family had always maintained close links with the wealthy Catholic elite of Monmouthshire, using them to manage both their estates and the political interests in the county. These families in turn acted as patrons of Catholic communities situated around their major properties, harboured priests and established private chapels. The patronage of these families by the Somersets was at least three generations old by the late seventeenth century.

Furthermore, beyond the region of Monmouthshire, other high status Catholics were also prepared to act in support of Catholicism in their local areas, even going so far as to actively undermine the Established Church in their localities. The behaviour of members of the Gunter family could be interpreted as an example of how some Catholic gentry sought to influence the religious culture of their neighbours. The Catholic branch of the family was important part of the urban gentry of Abergavenny in northern Monmouthshire. However, it appears that across the county border in

[85] Jenkins, "Anti-popery on the Welsh Marches", p. 281; M. McClain, "The Wentwood Forest Riot: Property Rights and Political Culture in Restoration England", in S. D. Amussen and M. A Kishlansky, *Political Culture and Cultural Politics in Early Modern England: Essays Presented to David Underdown*, (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1995) p. 119.

Breconshire, another member of the family was also attempting to shape the religious attitudes of the wider community. While Breconshire contained several recusant families, the behaviour of Bodenham Gunter seems to have brought him into conflict with the Protestants of the parish of Gwenddwr. Gunter, who died in the early eighteenth century, was a prominent local Catholic who forfeited his estates in 1652 on the charge that he had plotted against Cromwell.[86] It would seem that he sought to encourage the Catholic religion within the parish through his control of the Anglican living. The congregation complained in an undated petition to the bishop of St Davids that, Gunter had imposed a totally unsuitable curate on the community who fell out with nearly all the members of his congregation. The choice of a minister who "forgot" to read the service, Bible, Lord's Prayer or Ten Commandments, and regularly refused to even come to the parish, seems to suggest that Gunter was fully prepared to undermine the Established Church in his locality.[87]

The ability of wealthy Catholics to maintain their allegiance to the Church of Rome, provided their co-religionists in the lower social orders with invaluable access to priests and protection from persecution. These were not simply links that ran within the Catholic gentry, but seem to have provided some level of connection between different levels of Catholic society. Marked patterns of protection by more powerful Catholics of those below them in the social order were established as part of community life from early in the seventeenth century, when an overt Catholic leadership emerged amongst the Welsh aristocracy. Henry Somerset, the first marquess of Worcester, was known to have employed Catholics at his Raglan home and supported the mission across the border at the Cwm.[88] However, the protection

[86] Lewis, *From darkness to light*, p. 29.
[87] NLW Church in Wales: Diocese of St Davids Episcopal, MS 11/1186.
[88] Anon., *A True Relation Of A Damnable Gun-Powder Plot* (London, 1641), sig. A2-3.

afforded by this powerful noble collapsed after his death. When the third marquess of Worcester improved the family's political position in South Wales, the connections that the Somersets had with members of the Catholic gentry again proved useful. The influence of these gentry families in the Monmouthshire Bench and even in the county's deputy-lieutenancy, seem to have facilitated a degree of clemency towards Catholics in the 1660s and 1670s, much to the annoyance of some members of the anti-Worcester Protestant gentry.[89] The protection and promotion of Catholicism offered by these wealthy Catholics contributed significantly to the flourishing of Catholic communities in the eastern counties of Wales.

Despite periods of calm in relations between Protestants and Catholics, during the later seventeenth century, the threat of persecution by zealous JPs or official crackdowns from those higher up in the state, remained a real threat. It would seem that this high level of support for Catholicism at the top of Welsh society provides some explanation for the failure of many JPs to institute the laws against recusancy in their jurisdictions. In Parliament it was revealed that 'no convictions [were] estreated out of some counties... nor any out of Wales.' The committee charged with investigating the collection of recusancy fines, revealed that the sheriff of Monmouth, Rowland Prichard, had failed to collect four out of the nine fines levied in in 1677. Furthermore, the four recusants that had been fined were all Protestant Dissenters, while the five who weren't were Catholic.[90] Such behaviour was suspicious in the very least.

On the Welsh Marches, it had long been noted that the politically active families of Monmouthshire and Herefordshire showed a propensity to turn any dispute

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[89] Trevor, *An abstract of several examinations, passim.* Details of the promotion of members of the Catholic gentry to positions of influence will be discussed in chapter four.
[90] *CJ*, "29th April 1678", p. 6, accessed at http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=27610 on 18th January 2012.

into a religious conflict.[91] In this religiously volatile environment, it is perhaps unsurprising that accusations of protectionism and the promotion of Catholicism began to appear in the 1670s.[92] The Morgans of Llantarnum, the Milbornes of Clytha and William Jones of Llanarth were amongst the most controversial.[93] By acting alongside their co-religionists and maintaining close ties to the most powerful Catholic family in the region, these men were able to enjoy a limited period of political success and provide unprecedented protection to the wider community. Their activities suggest that some members of the Catholic community could be highly pragmatic in exploiting loopholes that allowed them to protect and even promote Catholic interests.

Some of the individuals that secured places as magistrates were outwardly conforming to the Anglican Church. However, their families cannot be regarded as just religiously mixed as they had long Catholic traditions and were still largely Catholic in nature. These "church papists" were a widely observed phenomenon, which caused concern to the Anglican elite and the Catholic clergy throughout the Reformation and post-Reformation years. Found in all areas of England and Wales, they highlighted a clear loophole in the anti-Catholic and anti-Dissenter system designed to exclude all but the staunchest Anglicans from government. By conforming to the requirements of the state, church papists could maintain a public career, but might then convert on their retirement.[94] One such family were the Milbornes of Clytha who appear to have maintained an organised system, whereby the

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[91] Knight, "'From the Welsh Good Lord Deliver Me'", p. 3. In 1603, rumours surfaced that Monmouthshire Catholics were stock-piling weapons and planning an armed insurrection. One of the worst disputes occurred over a Catholic burial in a parish churchyard in Herefordshire in 1605. It was feared that a full-scale rebellion would result from these Whitsun Riots. However, such disputes were not uncommon, occurring at Llanfrechfa, Usk, Llangattock-nigh-Usk, Bettws Newydd and St Woolas, as well as at Caerleon; Ibid, pp. 1, 3.

[92] Details of the political dispute between pro- and anti-Worcester factions will be discussed in chapter four.

[93] Trevor, *An abstract of several examinations*, pp. 12-20.

[94] Walsham, *Church Papists*, *passim*.

male family members conformed for the public parts of their careers, while the females maintained their allegiance to the Roman Church.[95] This allowed families to avoid the worst financial hardships incurred through failure to attend the parish church, as it was sometimes accepted that the male head of the household could participate in services for the whole family. Even if charges of recusancy were brought against the female relations, the fines were halved.[96] Similarly, it also allowed the family to maintain access to lucrative posts and positions, and gain an income.

The Milbornes were connected to the Somersets both professionally and by marriage. Originally from Milborne Port in Somerset, George Milborne (c. 1570-1637) had married the granddaughter of William Somerset, third earl of Worcester. The Milbornes became the Somersets' stewards in Monmouthshire, a position that was occupied by George, while his youngest son, Henry (c. 1630-92), was raised to the Bench in 1667 and then became recorder of Monmouth.[97]

However, the family's religious affiliations were complicated, in spite of Henry's official positions in the county. The female members of the family were clearly identified as Catholics. Henry's sisters, Lucy and Joan, married members of the Scudamore and Jones families respectively, both of whom were prominent Catholic families. Even those daughters that remained unmarried lived in a religiously unorthodox manner. Christian (c1600-81) and Catherine (c.1600-date unknown) Milborne remained spinsters throughout their lives, but were reported by informants

[95] Ellis, *The Catholic martyrs of Wales*, p. 130; Jenkins, "Anti-popery on the Welsh Marches", p. 291.
[96] Walsham, *Church Papists*, p. 78.
[97] Jenkins, "Anti-popery on the Welsh Marches", pp. 281, 288; N. Key and J. Ward, "'Divided into parties': Exclusion Crisis origins in Monmouth", *EHR*, 2000, p. 1162. For details of the Milborne family, see the family tree in Appendix D.

to the Commons' committee investigating popery in Monmouthshire. They were said to be served by the priest Walter Price and attended Mass at the Cwm.[98]

Henry Milborne denied publicly that he was in any way connected to the protection and promotion of Catholicism. In a published pamphlet produced in response to the allegations made about him and a number of other Monmouthshire JPs, Milborne states that he was estranged from his sisters. Furthermore, he asserted that the family rift was the result of Christian and Catherine's Catholicism.[99] However, the claims ring somewhat hollow when Milborne was himself forced to acknowledge that he had been raised within a Catholic family and educated in by a Catholic schoolmaster.[100] Yet more contradictions to Milborne's story can be found through examination of his sister, Christian's will. This document, produced in 1681, gives no hint to the lifelong rift that Milborne alleges, as Christian leaves money from her estate specifically to Henry.[101] This evidence gives some credence to the allegations that Henry Milborne protected his sisters from attempts to arrest their priests, and of aiding Catholic members of his own household. He was said to have gone so far as to violently assault the constable of a sitting court to aid his servants who had been charged with refusing to swear the Oath of Supremacy. This allowed the servants to escape the court and scandalised Milborne's Protestant neighbours.[102] Milborne, working in conjunction with his nephew, another Catholic JP, William Jones of Llanarth, also extended their protection to other Catholics living in the community. Despite the issuing of warrants for the arrest of Catholic recusants in these areas,

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[98] Trevor, *An abstract of several examinations*, p. 19; Croft, *A short narrative of the discovery of a college of Jesuits*, p. 10.
[99] Anon., *A Letter From a Gentleman in Glocestershire To a Friend In London* (London, [1679]) pp. 13-21.
[100] Ibid, p. 14.
[101] NLW, Milborne MS 37. For further details of the beneficiaries of Christian Milborne's will, please see appendix H.
[102] Trevor, *An abstract of several examinations*, pp. 7, 17-18, 19.

Milborne and Jones refused to order them be taken into custody, with Milborne arguing that the statutes against recusancy were designed for the prosecution of Protestant Dissenters, not Catholic subjects.[103] The support of Catholics even seems to have gone as far to as to allow other co-religionists and sympathisers to act as constables and churchwardens. The constable and churchwarden of Llangattock, William Cornelius, was named in 1678 as having acted as assistant to the priest David Lewis when he performed Mass in Monmouthshire.[104] Again, the occupancy of these positions in the lower levels of local government and law enforcement meant that many recusants and Catholics could avoid prosecution and arrest because of the protection provided by those responsible for executing the laws.

The existence of strong networks that could be used to protect Catholic interests suggests the degree to which this community was formed from bonds between and within social classes. Marriage appears to have been a powerful tool that could connect families, even across some geographical distance, extending the community's influence. As well as maintaining a connection with the powerful Somersets living in South Wales, the earls, later marquesses, of Powis enjoyed familial relationships with other leading members of the Catholic aristocracy and gentry of England and Scotland. The heirs and daughters of the family were married to members of the Percys, the earls of Nithsdale, and the wealthy Habington family of Worcestershire. Connections with these illustrious families meant that the highest levels of the Catholic community in Wales were also connected with the upper echelons of Catholic society across the British Isles.[105]

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[103] Trevor, *An abstract of several examinations*, pp. 12-20.
[104] Ibid, pp. 4-5.
[105] See the abridged Herbert family tree in Appendix A for details.

Further broad connections can be found amongst the Catholic baronets and gentry in both North and South Wales. As well as enjoying connections to the Somersets, the powerful Morgan family of Llantarnum were related to the local Catholic gentry through the marriage of Sir Edward Morgan to Frances, the widow of William Lewis of Abergavenny. Frances counted St David Lewis amongst her relations.[106] Catholic gentry families also maintained connections with the Catholics across the border in England, creating a community that was far from parochial in its scope. The Morgans had connections to the Catholic Englefields, Ann Mostyn of Talacre married into the Petres, while other members of the Mostyn family also maintained links with the Hornyholds of Worcestershire, the Daltons of Lancashire and the Selbys of County Durham.[107] Importantly, connections were also made between the communities of North and South Wales through the marriages of the wealthier Catholic gentry. The Mostyns of Talacre were connected through marriage to the notable Proger family of Monmouthshire.[108]

In Monmouthshire, interconnectedness through marriage was also in evidence amongst the professional classes as well. Catholics in the northern part of the county all seem to have been interrelated at some level by the late seventeenth century. In the town of Abergavenny, the major Catholic families of Gabb, Baker, Lewis, Pritchard and Gunter were all intermarried.[109] The Milborne family, who played a crucial role in the political community of local Catholics, were also connected through marriage to the Joneses of Treowen and Llanarth.[110]

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[106] NLW Martin Cleary, MS 8. For details of the connection of the Morgan, Jones and Milborne families, see Appendix E.
[107] NLW Martin Cleary, MS 7.
[108] For details of the Mostyn family's marriages, see the family tree in Appendix B.
[109] NLW MSS Joseph Herbert Canning 16/4, 16/13, 16/15, 16/16, 16/17; 17/27.
[110] NLW Martin Cleary, MS 8.

It has been argued that the marital arrangements of the Monmouthshire gentry were indicative of an extraordinary level of religious fluidity in the county, with Catholics and Protestants intermarrying at various levels.[111] However, close examination of these apparently mixed kin networks, can be interpreted as evidence of a different pattern of religious allegiance emerging in the aftermath of the Reformation. Intermarriage between Catholics and committed Protestants does not seem to have been as consistent a pattern as the links maintained between Catholic families. Given the Reformation's slow progress in Wales, it is perhaps unsurprising that the patterns of religious allegiance in gentry families could be fractured and complex. The conformity of some heirs in the mid-seventeenth century also could be interpreted as reflecting the social and economic pressures faced by many wealthy Catholic families in the aftermath of the Civil Wars.

The Milborne family could be seen as an example of this mixing of Catholic and Protestants through marriage. Consideration of Christian Milborne's will reveals that she left money to both her conforming and recusant male and female siblings as well as their children.[112] Funds and property were given to her recusant spinster sisters, Catherine and Elizabeth, and also to the children of her Catholic sister Lucy Scudamore. However, she also left land and money to her other conforming brother and sister, John and Mary, as well as their children.[113] While wills can seem to be merely the records of an individual's possessions accrued over a lifetime, they also tell us much about the relationships that bound families and communities together. Even in families like the Milbornes, where siblings and children may have developed their own ways of practicing their religious views, the ties of family relationships still

[111] Jenkins, "Anti-popery on the Welsh Marches", pp. 286-293.
[112] NLW, Milborne, MS 37. For details of Christian's legacy see Appendix H.
[113] NLW, Milborne, MS 37

held and were reinforced by the last gifts that individuals imparted to each other. As in other communities, family relationships through blood and marriage can be seen as forming the most basic links of a community.

As well as these lateral, marital connections between and within Catholic families, the gentry and the powerful noble families above them in the social scale also maintained vertical ties or employment and patronage. These ties were particularly important in the propagation of both the interests of noble Catholic families and the protection of other Catholics in the Marches of Wales. As the case over the enclosure of Wentwood Forest became increasingly heated amongst the Monmouthshire gentry, Henry Somerset, then third marquess, utilised the ties held between his family and those who managed their interests in the region to further his own cause.[114]

In the 1660s, his purge of the county Bench led a number of influential Catholic and church papist families gaining positions of influence as magistrates. Amongst those appointed was Henry Milborne, whose family had worked as stewards for the Somersets.[115] The complaints of members Protestant gentry against him would suggest that he did well in his role of representing Worcester's views. Similarly, the Abergavenny attorney, Thomas Gunter, appears to have received the patronage of the family, as he was discovered at Worcester House, the Somersets' London residence, during a 1641 raid.[116] Similar exploitation of economic links seems to have influenced the Catholicism of tenant farmers in other areas of South Wales, even creating links between English and Welsh Catholics. In 1706, the survey of Catholicism in the parishes of St Davids diocese revealed relatively few Catholics. However, in the parish of Clyro, Richard Davis, his wife and four children were named as Catholics.

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[114] Nathan Rogers, *Memories of Monmouthshire*, Ivor Waters (ed.) (Chepstow, Moss Rose, 1978 [1708]) pp.
[115] Jenkins, "Anti-popery on the Welsh Marches", pp. 281, 288
[116] NLW MS Martin Cleary 8.

The family were also identified as the tenants of John Vaughan Esq., of Courtfield in Herefordshire, whose family had long been important recusants in the Marches.[117] The association of Catholic yeomen and tenant farmers with Catholic landlords suggests the degree to which the Catholic gentry had developed reputations for using their financial and social networks as a means of promoting and protecting Catholicism.

The network created through political patronage, close familial bonds, employment and tenancy provided unique opportunities in some parts of Wales for Catholics to construct communities based on shared practices of communal worship. McClain has rightly drawn attention to the way in which Catholic pilgrims used shared patterns of worship and observance in the home and at ancient sites in the absence of a formal Church.[118] The use of gentry chapels and frequenting of sites where Mass was performed by the itinerant priesthood, appears to have brought together individuals from across quite wide ranging areas. At the major shrine of St Winifred, Catholics were drawn not only from across Wales, but also from the across the British Isles.[119] Participation in communal religious worship offered Catholics important opportunities to identify with the wider community of the Church as represented by the congregation, the priesthood and the rituals being observed.

However, it has been suggested that the general way in which religious culture was accommodated within everyday life in the Catholic community effected its demography. Several historians have noted the association between Catholicism and women in the anti-Catholic imagery of the era, and their over-representation in the

[117] NLW Church in Wales: Diocese of St Davids Episcopal 3, MS SD/RC 5.
[118] L. McClain, 'Without Church, Cathedral, or Shrine: The Search for Religious Space among Catholics in England, 1559-1625', *SCJ*, Vol. 33, 2002, passim; Idem, *Lest we be damned*, pp. 244-249.
[119] LRO, MS Lancashire County Quarter Sessions, QSP594/16

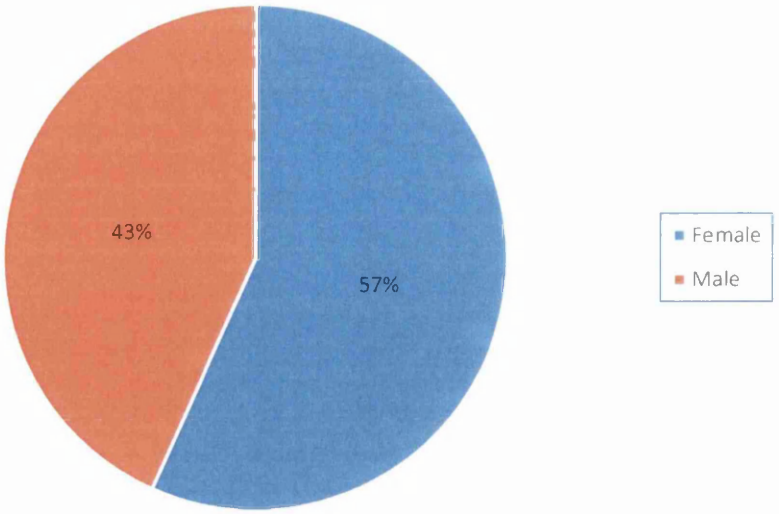

Fig. 3 Percentage of male and female Catholics in Monmouthshire in 1706.[120]

presentations of Catholic recusants and in surveys of those thought to be loyal to the Church of Rome. Examination of the data collected in South Wales in the early eighteenth centuries suggests that a similarly complex gender spilt had emerged in Monmouthshire in the post-Reformation period. [121] Unlike some surveys of the period, the 1706 data included female and male Catholics living in the county.[122] This provides an opportunity to examine the gender divide in the community that had emerged by this stage in its development. Bearing in mind the limited knowledge we have of how these statistics were collected, these conclusions can only by tentative, but they do suggest some interesting points about the feminisation of Catholicism in parts of Wales. Figure 3 shows the proportion of Catholics that were identified as male and female in the 1706 survey.[123] According to these records, 57% of the Catholic population in Monmouthshire were women. This 14% difference in male and female population sizes is of importance as it suggests that the Catholic population

[120] NLW MSS Tredegar 7 93/53-56, 93/59-58
[121] NLW MSS Tredegar 7, 93/53-56 and 93/58-59.
[122] NLW MS Tredegar 7 93/52
[123] NLW MSS Tredegar 7 93/53-56, 93/59-58

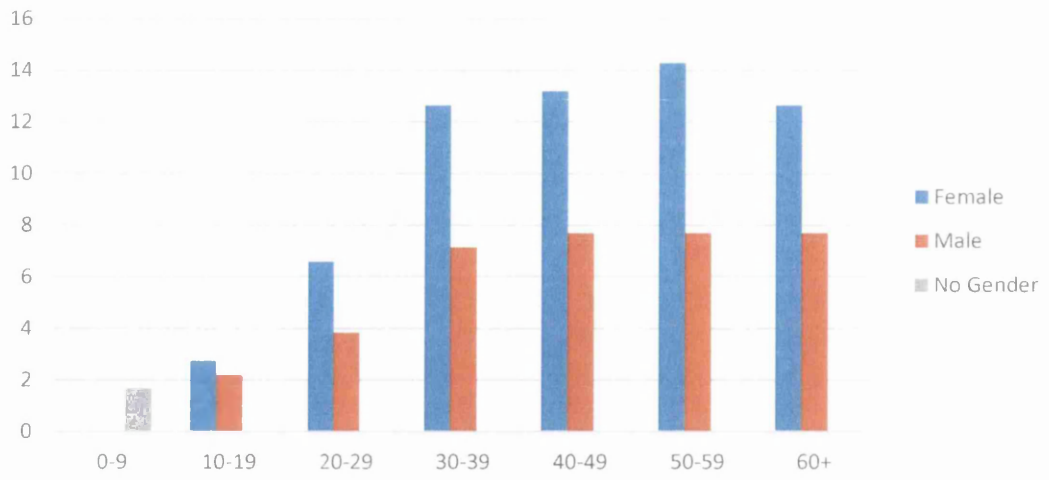

Fig. 4 - Percentage of Catholics in selected Monmouthshire parishes by age and gender. [124]

of Monmouthshire, like those in other areas of the British Isles, contained a significantly higher proportion of females to males.[125]

Further detail of how the gender split in Monmouthshire's Catholic population can be seen in Figure 4. This graph shows the percentages of Catholics in different age groups for each gender. The ages of Catholics living in Monmouthshire were not collected for all the parishes in Monmouthshire, but only for High, Frogmore, Rother and Twdder Streets in Abergavenny, Llanfair Kilgeddin, Goitre, Hardwick, Llangattock Juxta Usk, Trevethin, Llanellen, Llanfoist, Llanvihangel Crucorney, Cwmyoy, Oldcastle, Llangatock Genroyd, Llanveitherine, Llantilio Pertholey, Lloyndee, Llanarth, Llanddewi Rydderch and Llanvaplay.[126] However, even though this data does represent a complete record for Catholics living in Monmouthshire, it can still inform historians as to the demography of the community. The data shows

[124] NLW MSS Tredegar 7 93/53-56, 93/59-58
[125] M. B. Rowlands, "Harbourers and housekeepers: Catholic women in England 1570-1720", in B. Kaplan, B. Moore, H. Van Nierop and J. Pollmann (eds), *Catholic Communities in Protestant States: Britain and the Netherlands c.1570-1720* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2009), pp. 201-203.
[126] NLW MSS Tredegar 7 93/55 and 93/56.

that more women were represented in each age group where gender was recorded. However, the discrepancy between males and females increased markedly for individuals in their 20s and 30s. The discrepancy remains stable for age groups beyond 39 years of age.[127]

This suggests that an interesting pattern of religious observance based on gender may have been in evidence amongst the community in Monmouthshire. It could be argued that the increase in the gender discrepancy up to the age of 39 reflects the fact that men were likely to be engaged in more public roles than women at this age. Responsible for maintaining their families through trade, agricultural labour or the professional careers, men were less able to openly practice their religions. Instead women, confined to a more private life, were able to continue observing Catholic ritual and were, therefore, more likely to be identified as Catholics. Historians have also proposed that the feminisation of Catholicism in the aftermath of the Reformation was also the results of the domestication of Catholicism.[128] The need to maintain Catholic cultural practices in a discreet, private manner and the housing of illicit religious ceremonies within the domestic environment, meant that the household, rather than the parish church, was often the social centre for Catholic communities. Because the organisation of the household was perceived as a female responsibility, women came to play a highly significant role in managing religious observance in Catholic families.[129]

However, it should not be assumed that the higher female Catholic population in parts of Wales led to Catholicism becoming a private affair. In both North and South Wales, women played significant, and relatively public roles in supporting the

[127] Ibid.
[128] Dolan, 'Gender and the "Lost" Spaces of Catholicism', pp. 654-655.
[129] Ibid.

Catholic community by sheltering priests and providing access to chapels. In North Wales, Ann Fox Mostyn Petre emerged as a significant figure in the Catholic community of Holywell, supporting a school at the home of her first husband at Greenfield, and working with her second husband to fund an inn to house and support Jesuits in the town.[130] In South Wales, Lady Morgan of Llantarnum, Winifred Scudamore, Lady Jones of Treowen and the sisters Christian and Katherine Milborne all sheltered priests in their homes and offered facilities for the performance of Mass.[131] Through these actions, these women provided crucial access to priests and the sacraments. In using their homes in this fashion, these women turned these private places into arenas for the observance of religious ritual for the wider community.

The differing patterns of observance that can be seen between men and women in Wales' Catholic population, lead to important questions regarding the ways in which Catholics managed their relationships with non-Catholic family members. In the absence of equal numbers of openly Catholic males, did women who remained Catholic simply not marry? Did they hide their religion until their husbands' died? Or did a complex marital arrangement exist in these families whereby women could practice their religion even if it could bring the husbands' reputations into disrepute?

Evidence reported in the mid-seventeenth century about some religiously mixed families suggests that such arrangements could be difficult to negotiate. In North Wales, the Mostyn family of Talacre contained several Catholics. As has been shown, Ann Fox Mostyn was a prominent member of the local community in Holywell. Her decision to open a Jesuit school at her home was controversial in the local community, not least because it was reported to be without her husband's

[130] NLW Martin Cleary, MS 7, p. 22; Seguin, "Cures and Controversy in Early Modern Wales", pp. 10, 13-14.
[131] Trevor, *An abstract of several examinations*, pp. 3-5, 7-8, 14, 19.

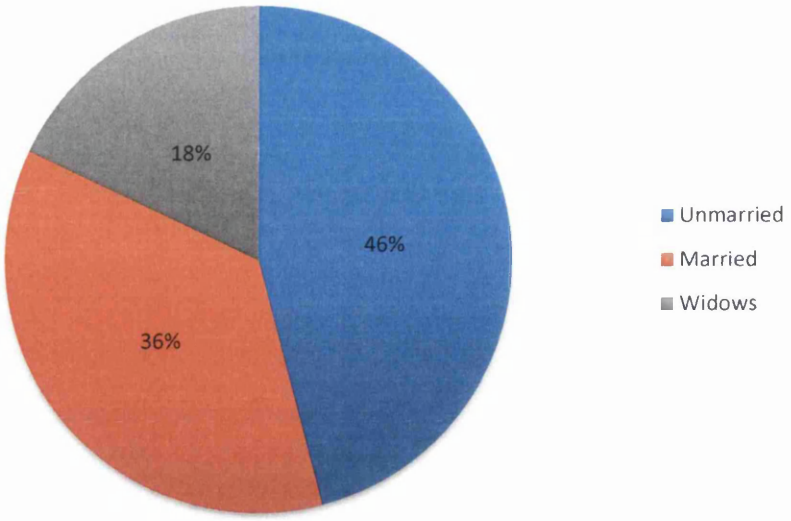

Fig. 5 Percentage of female Catholics by marital status.[132]

consent.[133] While John Mostyn's lack of awareness of his wife's latest attempts to promote Catholicism in the local community could be seen as suggesting serious religious discord between the couple, the pattern of marriages in the Mostyn family would suggest that he cannot have been unaware of his wife's religious proclivities. His great-uncle had married into the Conwys of Bodrhyddan, Flintshire, who emerged as leading Catholics, while his son and heir married a daughter of the Catholic Draycotts of Painsley Hall in Norfolk.[134] This would suggest that the Mostyns observed a complex arrangement whereby nominally Anglican husbands married Catholic wives, who then acted to maintain the Catholic community.

Further evidence that some Catholic women must have continued to practice their religion after they were married can be seen Figure 5. This figure shows the percentages of the female Catholic population by their marital status. Over a third of female Catholics were married, suggesting that a significant minority of the population

[132] NLW MSS Tredegar 7 93/53-56, 93/59-58
[133] NLW MS Martin Cleary 7
[134] Ibid.

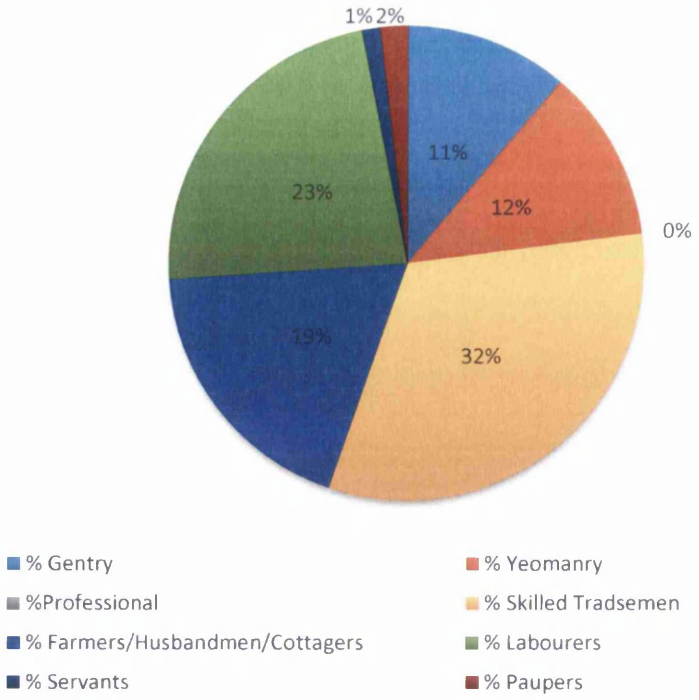

Fig. 6 The percentage of male Catholics by occupational category.[135]

chose to observe their religion after marriage, alongside their husbands, with his consent or were prepared to risk his censure.[136]

The 1706 survey does not record the marital status of male Catholics so it was not possible to produce a similar analysis of their familial arrangements and how they functioned. However, the petty constables and constables did record their occupations.[137] This data is crucial in examining another key aspect of Catholic demography in Wales in this period – their socio-economic status. Traditionally, it has been argued that Catholicism in the rural borderlands of the British Isles was dominated by those members of the aristocracy and landed gentry that chose not to conform after the religious settlement created by Elizabeth I. The large land and property holdings of these families meant that they were able to dominate the

[135] Ibid.
[136] Ibid.
[137] Ibid.

surrounding area to their own advantage. This is a pattern that has also been suggested as prominent in Welsh Catholic society.[138]

If this was the case it would be expected that the majority of Catholics listed in the 1706 survey would have been servants and tenant farmers who were dependent on the gentry for employment and land. Figure 6 shows this data as the percentages of male Catholics in each occupational category. Interestingly, the majority of Catholics (32%) were skilled tradesmen. The next two largest groups were labourers (23%) and farmers, husbandmen and cottagers (19%). While it could be argued that both labourers and husbandmen could have been subject to influence in their religious proclivities by those who employed them, the fact that only 1% of the male Catholic population were servants suggests that influence from employers cannot account entirely for the distribution of the majority of Catholics in lower level socio-economic groups. However, this is not to deny that wealthier Catholics were still a significant presence in the community in the early eighteenth century. In 1706, 12% of the population were listed as yeomen, while 11% were reported to be gentlemen.[139] These figures suggest that the Catholic community was diverse in its socio-economic make-up. The influence of wealthy Catholics, particularly members of the aristocracy during the mid-seventeenth century, cannot be discounted. However, to ignore the degree to which Catholicism had significant popular support in parts of Wales would be to ignore the evidence presented in the contemporary surveys of the population.

Given the varied demography of the Catholic community in many parts of Wales, clear questions arise as to how such a significant population could have arisen along the English-Welsh border in an era of clear, state-sanctioned legal persecution.

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[138] Jenkins, "Anti-popery on the Welsh Marches", pp. 280.
[139] NLW MSS Tredegar 7 93/53-56, 93/59-58

It would seem that the experiences of Catholics in the late seventeenth century were not simply one of continuous struggle to support a community based around shared political, economic and social interests, but was also one of expansion and contraction and toleration, as well as persecution. Debate has arisen as to how the Catholic population in Wales changed and developed in the period after the Restoration as it adapted to the ever-changing political and social pressures of these years. Old historical investigations have asserted that Catholicism in the final decades of the seventeenth century in Wales was a declining force. The failure of the Royalist cause in the Civil Wars meant that the few Catholics that had supported the king faced real loss of power and influence as their estates were sequestered. The conversion of Henry Somerset to Anglicanism could be seen at one level to have been a significant blow to Catholic political power in South Wales. The destruction of the Jesuit mission based at the Cwm in Herefordshire, has been interpreted as being a final blow to the already declining Catholic population in the south. In this narrative the eighteenth century became a period of Catholic collapse, with the community only being revived by the immigration of Irish Catholics in the nineteenth century.[140]

Similarly, the fortunes of the Catholic community of North Wales have also been interpreted as declining in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The use of the chapel at Holywell to house the Great and Quarter Session in the county in the 1680s suggested that the shrine had fallen into decline and was used merely as a picturesque bathing pool.[141] However, there has been some debate as to when and why these changes occurred.[142]

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[140] Jenkins, "A Welsh Lancashire?", p. 176.
[141] Thomas Pennant, *The History of the Parishes of Whiteford and Holywell*, (1796) 1988, pp. 220-221.
[142] Ibid, pp. 176-188

The surveys of Catholic population in 1696 and 1706 provide some capacity to compare populations in one particular part of Wales and consider the way that the population was changing over time. Unfortunately, the entire data set of 1706 cannot be compared with that produced a decade earlier, as those gathering the data in these two surveys set out to measure Catholicism in the county in different ways. The 1696 survey only included males in the data set, excluding women and children. However, the detailed records compiled by the petty constables in 1706, mean that it is possible to calculate the male population that they recorded for the county. As a result, it is possible to consider to a certain degree how the male Catholic population changed in the decade between 1696 and 1706. The results of this analysis are shown in figures 7 and 8. Again the geographical locations have been divided between towns and villages located in the heartland and those located in other areas of Monmouthshire. [143]

In figure 7, it can be seen that while there was decline in some of the towns located in the county's north-eastern Catholic heartland, there was an increase in 13 of these parishes. In some, the increase in population was marked. Outside of the heartland, there were also more increases than decreases. However, these were not as significant as those found in the heartland parishes. Overall, the male Catholic population increased by 95 individuals.[144] While this data is incomplete, as not all the parishes examined in 1706 were also consider in 1696, the evidence that does exist would suggest that in the county of Monmouthshire, a more complex pattern of change was taking place.

[143] NLW MSS Tredegar 7 93/53-56, 93/59-58
[144] Ibid.

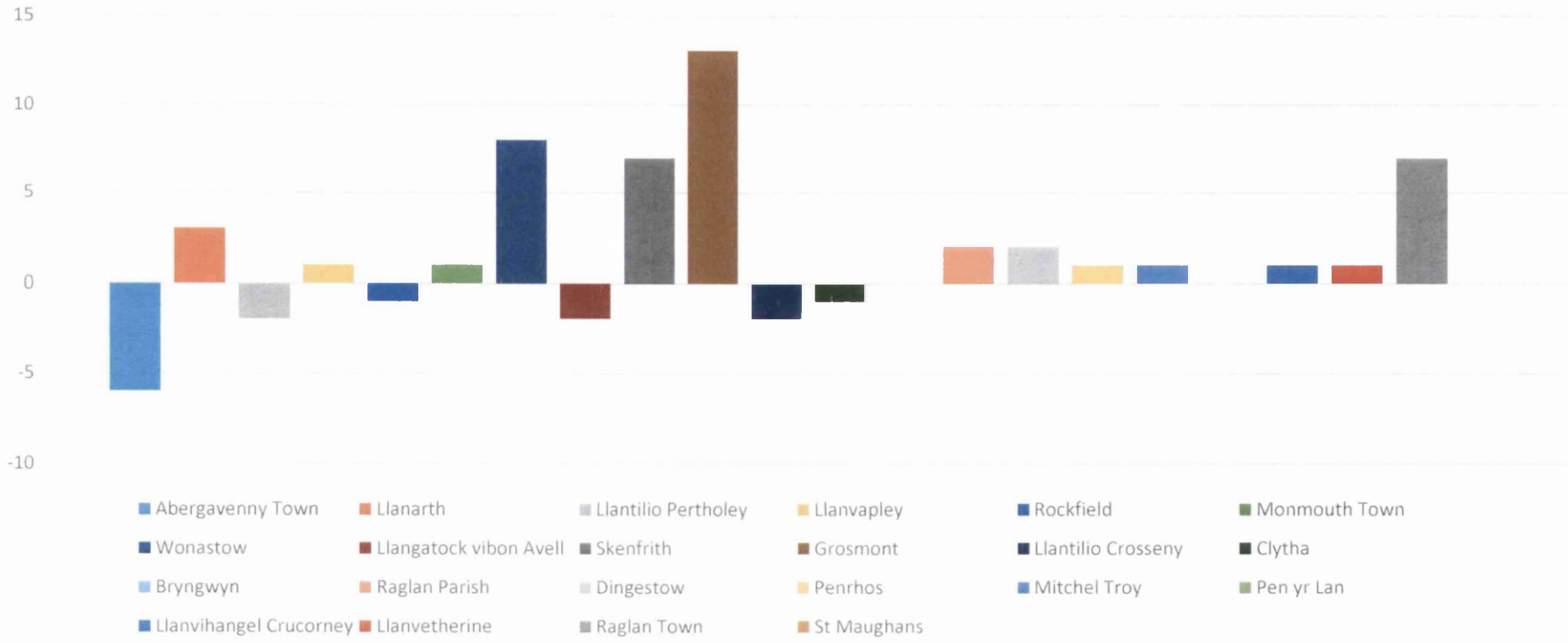

Fig. 7 - Differences in male Catholic population between 1696 and 1706 surveys of Monmouthshire.[145] The data is for towns inside the heartland area identified by Jenkins.[146]

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[145] NLW MSS Tredegar 7 93/53-56, 93/59-58
[146] Jenkins, "Anti-popery on the Welsh Marches", p. 277

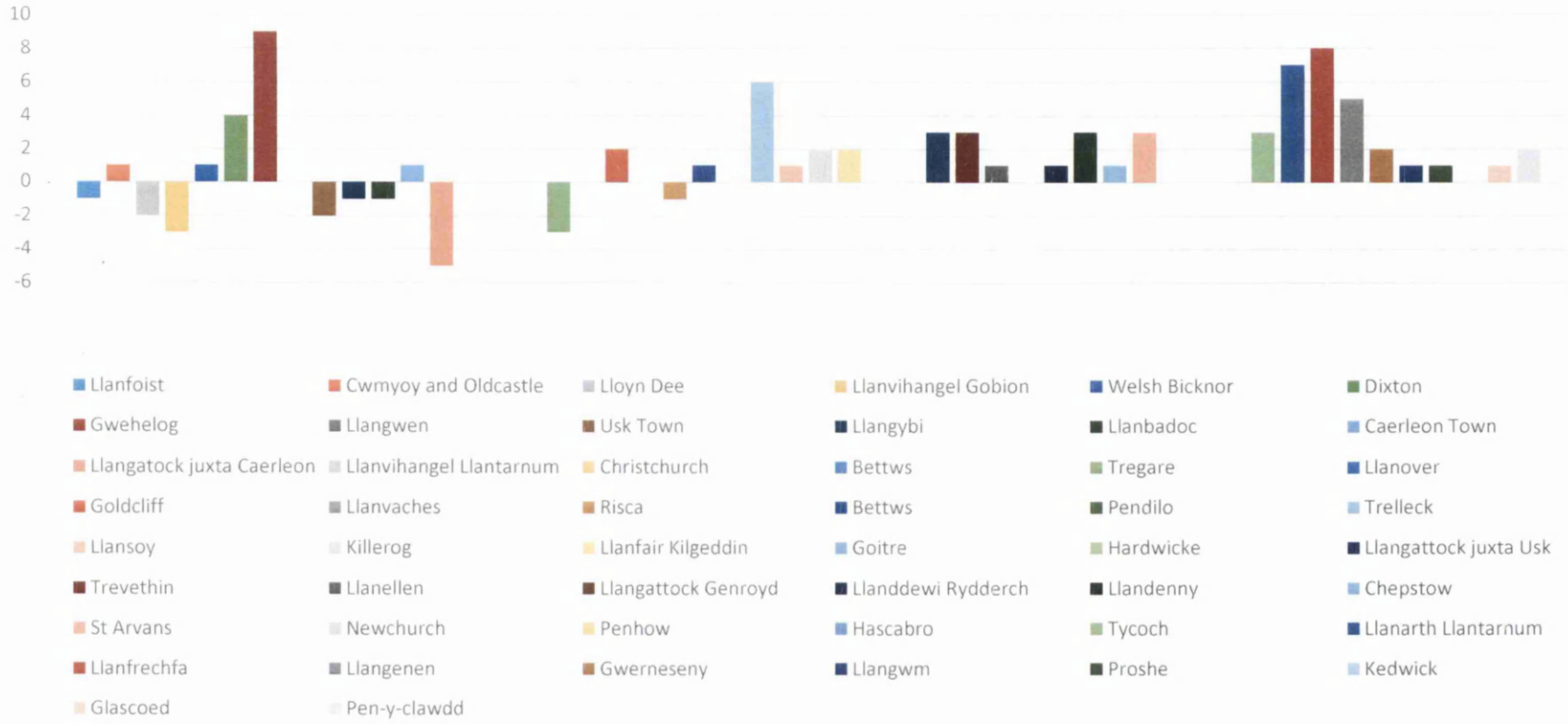

Fig. 8 – Differences in male Catholic population between 1696 and 1706 surveys of Monmouthshire.[147] The data is for towns outside the heartland area identified by Jenkins.[148]

[147] NLW MSS Tredegar 7 93/53-56, 93/59-58
[148] Jenkins, "Anti-popery on the Welsh Marches", p. 277

What could account for this apparent increase in the male population? It could be argued that these differences merely reflect the incompleteness of the data in 1696, which could mask an overall decline in the Catholic population. However, given the trend towards lower levels of male engagement with Catholicism that has been identified previously, this would seem to be an unlikely explanation for the entire pattern of growth in the county. Instead it would seem necessary to consider other possible explanations.

Importantly, there is clear evidence that at least the male contingent of the Catholic community in Monmouthshire was not collapsing in this period, but was possibly continuing to add to its ranks. Furthermore, there is also evidence that would suggest that the decline of the Catholic population in Monmouthshire outside the original heartland region was not taking place in the early years of the eighteenth century. Instead the population outside the heartland was continuing to grow, though at a slower rate. However, consideration of the population distribution by age in some of the parishes surveyed in 1706, would suggest that the decline that was noted by some historians may have been a feature of later years in the eighteenth century. As shown in figure 4, the great bulk of the Catholic population was over the age of 30, meaning that they had been born pre-1676. By comparison, those under the age of 20 are far smaller in number.[149]

These trends chime with the evidence of growth and decline that emerge in the complaints of Protestant communities of Monmouthshire, Montgomeryshire and other counties on the March in the late 1600s. Complaints were made about the apparent growth in the number of Catholics in these counties. Accusations that Catholicism

[149] Ibid.

was being actively promoted were made throughout the post-Restoration period in Monmouthshire.[150] This perceived growth in the number of Catholics was also noted by those living in North and Mid Wales. In letters exchanged by members of the Protestant Herbert family of Cherbury, it was noted that there was increasing fear over the spread of Catholicism in the region.[151] However, in a letter to his brother-in-law, Edward, Lord Herbert, expressed confidence that the Welsh justices in their region would deal with the perceived problem in a 'moderate and just' way, laying 'envy and malice aside'.[152]

In the late 1670s concerns over the increased number of Catholics across Wales took on new political significance as members of the Protestant Whig gentry sought to challenge the dominance of the marquess of Worcester. Since his conversion to Protestantism, Henry Somerset had been able to re-establish his family's control over the political landscape of eastern and southern Wales. McClain argues that, following the collapse of Somerset power as a result of their Royalism and Catholicism, the Protestant gentry had enjoyed unusual levels of political independence and dominance.[153] After his conversion, Henry Somerset was able to return to playing a prominent role as the Crown's representative in the Marches. His conversion did not, however, change the patterns of political, social and economic patronage that had been a feature of this region for much of the seventeenth century, and the marriages of his aunts and sister meant that he was still closely connected to several powerful Catholic

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[150] Trevor, *An abstract of several examinations, passim*; NLW Penrice and Margam Muniments 2, MS L151.
[151] NLW MSS 8001-11341, MS 9346B.
[152] NLW Powis Castle Correspondence 1, MS 21988.
[153] M. McClain, "The Wentwood Forest Riot: Property Rights and Political Culture in Restoration England", in S. D. Amussen and M. A. Kishlansky, *Political Culture and Cultural Politics in Early Modern England: Essays Presented to David Underdown* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1995) pp. 119-120.

families. By the 1670s, Henry Somerset was connected to the Arundels of Wardour, Herberts of Powis Castle and the duke of Norfolk. [154]

In these heated political circumstances, it could be argued that accusations of increased popery in Wales reflected attempts by members of the increasingly radical Whig faction to remove threats to their power through exploitation of widespread anti-popery. However, it is important to remember that the Catholic missions in both North and South Wales had operated with little interference since the Restoration. With greater concern focusing on the persecution and prosecution of the newly emerged sects of Dissenters, Catholic priests seem to have quietly continued ministering to increasingly significant congregations.[155] The weakening of Anglicanism as a religious force through the removal of religiously suspect vicars during the Interregnum, meant that the already neglected parishes of some regions were left without consistent access to the Established Church. It would seem that remarkable levels of local tolerance were shown at this time. Rowland Pritchard of Monmouthshire rented a house to a priest, allowing him to perform Mass at the property.[156] A letter from the Secretary of State in 1678 suggests that the comings and goings of priests to the home of Christian Turberville in Glamorgan was also tolerated by JPs to an embarrassing extent.[157]

However, it is important to note that Catholic expansion in Wales between the Restoration and Popish Plot of 1678 did not go unchecked. Outside of the counties running along the Welsh-English borders that had retained large numbers of Catholics since 1540s, Catholicism was a weak force with scattered families maintaining their

[154] McClain, *Beaufort*, chap. 6-7. For details of the intermarriage of the Somersets with the Catholic aristocracy, see appendix G.
[155] Anon., *An alarum to corporations*; Anon., *For the king and both houses of Parliament.*
[156] Trevor, *An abstract of several examinations*, p. 17.
[157] NLW Penrice and Margam Muniments 2, MS L151.

faith in considerable isolation. However, inside counties like Monmouthshire, Breconshire and Flintshire, sizeable populations of Catholics were found and flourished in the absence of real attempts to deal with them legally. Monmouthshire has been described as containing 'Catholic parishes' by the 1670s, where Protestants were in the minority.[158] Even in Glamorgan, a county that did not possess a hugely significant population, some Catholics seemed to operate without any fear of persecution.[159]

By maintaining a political community, Catholics in some parts of Wales were able to create circumstances in which they could live in relative peace with their Protestant neighbours. However, the social bonds that operated to support the Catholic community did not go unnoticed by the increasingly resentful Protestant gentry. It is through their reports to the House of Commons in 1678, that much information on the activities of Welsh Catholics was gathered. These reports do reflect the political animosity and rivalry of the Anglican and Dissenter alliance to the Worcester faction, and the attempts made to smear Worcester's reputation in Parliament and at Court. However, their identification of a clear community of Catholics acting in a cooperative fashion in the region is important.

While attempts were made to deny the allegations, such accounts were not always convincing. In an anonymously published response to these serious accusations, the written testimonies of Henry Milborne and his fellow JPs to the marquess of Worcester protesting their innocence of the charges against them, were reproduced.[160] However, these denials seem unconvincing given Milborne's acknowledgment of his Catholic past and the inclusion of a testimony from the vicar

[158] Knight, "'From the Welsh Good Lord Deliver Me'", pp. 1-3.
[159] NLW Penrice and Margam Muniments 2, MS L151.
[160] Anon., *A letter from a gentleman in Glocestershire, passim.*

of Llanarth, Thomas Watkins. Given Watkins' willingness to denounce the activities of Catholics in his parish in the evidence presented to the Commons, it would seem unlikely that he would be willing to protect one of their main sympathisers. [161] It would seem that at least some of the supporting testimony that Milborne claimed to have secured was dubious in its authenticity. Similarly, the fact that no Catholics were presented for recusancy during the 1660s or 1670s also seems a glaring omission of the Monmouthshire Bench's responsibilities.[162] It would seem that despite attempts to refute the allegations that Catholics and those sympathetic to them acted to deflect persecution from the community, there is clear evidence that, in some parts of Wales, they were able to successfully operate within local politics and government during this period.

While there is evidence to suggest that Catholicism in some parts of Wales had enjoyed a period of expansion in the 1660s and 1670s, it is important to acknowledge that the subsequent decades of the seventeenth century presented real challenges to the community's survival. The relative tolerance of the Restoration era was followed by a major blow as the assault on Catholic practices ushered in by the crisis of the late 1670s began. The link connecting the political and economic crisis erupting over Wentwood Chase and the panic generated by Oates' allegations are complex. It has been suggested that the origins of the story of a Catholic plot lay in rumours that had circulated on the Welsh-English borders for many years. Key and Ward have drawn attention to the role played by Israel Tonge in the propagation of Oates' story and the fact that Tonge had previously worked as a minister in the Monnow Valley in eastern Monmouthshire. They propose that, having heard these Welsh tales of massacres and

[161] Ibid, pp.14, 24.
[162] *CJ*, Vol. 9, "29 April 1678", p. 201, accessed at http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=27610, on 18th Jan 2012.

insurrection, Tonge used them, in conjunction with the tales of Oates, to create a fake plot against the life of the king, Tonge and Herbert Croft, bishop of Hereford.[163] The emergence of William Bedloe as an apparent witness to the murder of Edmundbury Godfrey with further evidence of an apparent conspiracy, and highlights yet another connection with Monmouthshire. Bedloe was a native of the county and was linked to the Whig party opposing Worcester and Catholicism in South Wales through his first cousin, William Kemeys. Kemeys was sheriff of Chepstow in 1678 and a leading opponent of Henry Somerset.[164] Bedloe alleged that Charles Price, steward to Worcester and Capt. Spalding of the Chepstow garrison, were planning a rising by local Catholics using arms manufactured at Raglan Castle by one David Winkett, employed by the marquess of Worcester.[165]

The close ties between the tales of conspiracy emerging in London and the political struggle between Worcester and his opponents created catastrophic consequences for Catholic priests and laymen in Wales. It provided an opportunity for members of the Protestant gentry of South Wales to discredit the wealthy Catholics that opposed them, arrest and execute the Catholic priests operating along the Marches and launch a sustained attack on the marquess of Worcester. Monmouthshire and Glamorgan's Catholic communities suffered the worst outbreaks of anti-popish violence outside of London. The Cwm was destroyed in a raid led by the former JP John Arnold and Herbert Croft, the bishop of Hereford. Eight priests were executed or died from exhaustion, exposure and mistreatment in prison or in the countryside while attempting to flee the priest-hunters who pursued them.[166] Individual Catholic

[163] Key and Ward, "'Divided into parties'", pp. 1167-1168.
[164] Mitchell, "Nathan Rogers and the Wentwood Case", pp. 42-43.
[165] *Journal of the House of Lords*, 13, 1675-1681, pp. 350-355, http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=11600&strquery=bedloe, 25 September 2011; Mitchell, "Nathan Rogers and the Wentwood Case", p. 43.
[166] Ellis, *The Catholic martyrs of Wales*, pp. 104-139, 161-168.

families were also targeted when a pope-burning was held at Abergavenny, one of the few to ever occur outside of the capital.[167]

Even as enthusiasm for the plot was dying down in London, accusations were still being made against Welsh Catholics. In an attempt to keep the extreme anti-popery alive, John Arnold staged an attempt on his life in Jackanapes Lane in London. He accused a Monmouthshire Catholic and chief constable of Usk, John Giles, alleging that the attack had been motivated by Arnold's pursuit and prosecution of the priest, Fr. Philip Evans, who was executed in Cardiff. Giles had publicly denied the truth of the Popish Plot and was a known Catholic in public office, a clear target for those wishing to highlight and remove the influence of the Catholic community on local politics.[168] Giles was found guilty, fined, imprisoned and pilloried, nearly being stoned to death by a London mob who admired Arnold as a Protestant hero.[169]

Once the dust had settled and the anti-popish fervour subsided, the Catholic community on the southern Marches faced bleak prospects. The Protestant extremists led by Sir Trevor Williams and John Arnold did not succeed in overthrowing Worcester's dominance of local politics. Henry Somerset brought a case of *scandalum magnetum* against them both, leading to their being fined and imprisoned. Somerset made a grand and successful progress through Wales in 1683.[170] However, the execution of so many priests and the bright light that had been cast on their activities

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[167] Anon., *The popes downfall: or A true and perfect relation of his being carried through the fair in a solemn procession with very great ceremony* (London, 1679), p. 4.
[168] Anon., *An account of an attempt made upon the person of Mr Arnold* (London, c. 1680); Idem, *Clamor sanguinis: or the cry of blood* (London, 1680); Idem, *England's second warning-piece; or observations on the barbarous attempt to murther Justice Arnold April the 15th 1680* (London, c. 1680); Idem, *Narrative of the most material proceedings at the Sessions for London and Middlesex* (London, 1680); Idem, *The bill of indictment exhibited against John Giles* (London, c. 1680); Idem, *The trial of John Giles at the Sessions House in the Old Bayly* (London, 1681).
[169] Mitchell, "Nathan Rogers and the Wentwood Case", p. 48; Stephen Bernard, "'Tonson's remains': the earliest letters of Jacob Tonson the Elder", *ECL*, 35, 2011, p. 208.
[170] McClain, *Beaufort*, chap. 7.

meant that there could be no return to the strength of Catholicism that was witnessed in the 1660s and early 1670s.

In comparison, Mid and North Wales fared better in the turmoil of the Popish Plot and Exclusion Crisis. While priests were apprehended and executed, the shrine at Holywell remained in operation. The main damage to Catholicism in the region came as a result of the arrest and detention of the earl and countess of Powis. The earl, William Herbert, was named by Oates and Bedloe as a conspirator in the supposed plot to kill the king.[171] Imprisoned in the Tower along with the other alleged aristocratic traitors, William Herbert languished under suspicion for many years. His faith and familial relationship to the marquess of Worcester made him a clear target for those wishing to incriminate Catholics in positions of power. His wife, Elizabeth, also became embroiled in the affair when she ill-advisedly became entangled with the Catholic midwife, Elizabeth Cellier, and Thomas Dangerfield.[172]

In this atmosphere of accusation and counter accusation, the links between different Catholic families and individuals took on a new significance. Men like Sir Trevor Williams and John Arnold, seeking to challenge the political control of South Wales exercised by the marquess of Worcester, accused many Catholics of exercising arbitrary power and breaking the law. Oates' allegations against the five Catholic lords - the earl of Powis, the Viscount Stafford, Baron Arundell of Wardour, Lord Petre and Lord Belasyse – led to the arrest and imprisonment of three of Worcester's close relations. Similarly, the less wealthy Catholics that were targeted and accused

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[171] *LJ*, "25th October, 1678", *13, 1675-1681*, pp. 301-302, http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=11584&strquery=earl of powis, accessed on 26th September 2011; *LJ*, "12th November 1678", 13, 1675-1681, pp. 350-355, http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=11600&strquery=bedloe, accessed 25th September 2011

[172] Thomas Dangerfield, *Mr Thomas Dangerfield's second narrative: wherein is contained a faithful charge against the Lady Powis, Mr Stamford, (the duke of Newburghs resident) and Mrs Cellier* (London, 1680).

of interfering in the execution of recusancy laws, were also often linked to the Somersets. While the close economic, social and familial connections of the Catholic community had proved useful in furthering their interests, it was also a weakness that could allow rival members of the Protestant gentry to target them. While accusations of Catholicism against Henry Somerset would not stick and his friendship with the king made it difficult to openly attack him, claims that his Catholic and church papist supporters were involved in mistreatment and lawlessness were more plausible. By association, Henry Somerset was implicated in the active promotion of Catholicism in parts of Wales. Similarly, his close relationship to those supposed to have plotted against the king could also be used to bring his loyalty into question. The ties joining Catholics living in Wales and further afield may have proved to be their strength in the relative tolerance of the Restoration, but they also proved to be their undoing as local and national concerns over Catholic power began to grow.

In the aftermath of these disasters, it would seem that the Catholic community of Wales did enter a period of change. Without sufficient numbers of priests to minister to the laity's needs, Catholicism could not be maintained in the same fashion as it had for much of the seventeenth century. However, this was not a period of whole-scale collapse, rather a retreat back into the traditional heartlands along the Marches.[173] Consideration of those identified as Catholics in the survey of 1706 reveal that Monmouthshire still retained large numbers of Catholics.[174] Holywell continued to operate as a Catholic shrine and received a considerable boost from the royal pilgrimage that was made to the site by James II and Mary of Modena in 1686.[175] It should also be noted that the official tolerance offered during James' reign also proved

[173] Jenkins, "A Welsh Lancashire?", pp. 176-188.
[174] NLW MSS Tredegar 7 93/53-56 and 93/58-59.
[175] Seguin, "Cures and Controversy in Early Modern Wales", p. 16.

of some benefit to Catholics living in both the north and south. A Franciscan mission operated at the Gunters' home in Frogmore Street at Abergavenny.[176] Catholics also enjoyed their new found ability to participate in public life without having to hide behind outward conformity. James' determination to lift the restrictions placed on his co-religionists through the Test Acts allowed men like John Stevens of Welshpool to enter the service of the Crown. Stevens worked as commissioner of the excise in the Montgomeryshire town, and travelled extensively through the counties of Radnorshire, Cardiganshire, Merionethshire and Shropshire. While Stevens records that both his father and brother worked in the service of Charles II, Stevens' open Catholicism would have excluded him from such service if it had not been for the brief period of toleration that occurred under James.[177]

However, this tolerance was not to last, and Stevens records the reaction that occurred in Wales to news that the Catholic king had fled and the forces of William of Orange had landed in Devon. Stevens had been in London at the time and quickly returned to Welshpool in an attempt to protect both his position and his property. He sought protection for his horses for fear that they would be confiscated, and noted that the homes of other Catholics in the area had been ransacked. Among the most prominent of these was the Jacobite William Herbert, earl of Powis. Stevens felt his position had become too precarious and his loyalty to James demanded that he joined the Jacobite forces and journeyed throughout Ireland as a soldier.[178]

With the collapse of Jacobite rule and the suspicion that lingered over the loyalty of Catholics to the Protestant state, there was no longer an opportunity to rebuild the Catholic mission in Wales to its former levels. While the families that had

[176] NLW MS Martin Cleary 33.
[177] D. L. Jones, "The Glorious Revolution in Wales", *NLWJ*, 26, 1989, pp. 28-29.
[178] Ibid, pp. 28-30.

remained loyal to the Church of Rome continued to be recorded as recusants and non-jurors, the support that the community had received through wealthy patrons also began to decline in the eighteenth century.[179] As numerous families failed to continue their male line, members of the Catholic gentry faced the additional pressure as many heiresses chose to enter convents on the Continent. It was in the first decades of the eighteenth century that families like the Morgans of Llantarnum and even the Herberts of Powis Castle saw family estates pass into the hands of Protestant relations.[180] However, it is important not to see this decline as a total collapse. Some Catholic families continued to maintain their faith into the modern era. The Lewises produced another David Lewis who joined the Jesuits like his illustrious ancestor, and the Baker-Gabb family remained loyal to their faith over several generations, being listed amongst the first congregation of the Catholic church established in Abergavenny in the nineteenth century.[181]

While the strength of Catholicism clearly peaked and troughed throughout the late seventeenth century, it would appear that the remarkable levels of tolerance, punctuated by periods of virulent persecution, had a significant effect on how Catholics conducted their dealings with the wider community. It is easy to interpret the lives of English and Welsh Catholics living in the post-Reformation era as one dominated by exclusion and ill-treatment sanctioned from on high. However, consideration of the years from the Restoration to the beginning of the eighteenth century reveals far greater fluctuations in the interactions between Protestants and Catholics. This is particularly noticeable in eastern parts of Wales.

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[179] NLW Joseph Herbert Canning, MSS 1/9-13
[180] Jenkins, "A Welsh Lancashire?", pp. 176-188; M. Murphy, "A House Divided: The Fall of the Herberts of Powis, 1688-1775", *RH*, 26, 1, 2002, *passim*.
[181] NLW Joseph Herbert Canning, MSS16/16, 16/91, 17/27.

Tensions between Protestants and Catholics did flair frequently in the early modern period throughout Monmouthshire and the Marches, and also in North Wales over the use of the shrine at Holywell. No region of Wales was immune from disputes over religion. The onset of increasing political and social crises in the mid-seventeenth centuries added further to the existing tensions in Wales. It was these political and social divisions, as well as pre-existing religious tensions, that continued to be played out, often violently, in the years to come.

One of the major effects that official intolerance of Catholic worship had upon these communities is reflected in the circumspect way that many Catholics had to hide certain aspects of their lives. From the Elizabethan period onwards, Catholics sought to avoid exposure of their relationships with priests, collection of illicit religious material and hosting of religious ceremonies through the construction of priest-holes and hidden rooms. Such spaces acted to provide concealment of priests and incriminating evidence in case of a raid. Their inclusion in homes constructed and modified during the mid and late sixteenth centuries is unsurprising given the level of government concern over Catholicism. However, their continued existence and construction within properties used in the later seventeenth century, is indicative of an ongoing concern over persecution, even in areas with considerable aristocratic protection. Thomas Gunter had a priest-hole constructed at the entrance to his private chapel to hide the numerous priests that ministered to his family and other Catholics living in and around Abergavenny.[182] Even wealthy Catholics felt the need to protect themselves from exposure and investigation by their Protestant neighbours. At the former home of the Joneses of Treowen, well known and active Catholics, priest-holes

[182] See Plate 7 in Appendix D for details.

can still be seen in the house today.[183] The inclusion of these spaces in these properties seem to reflect the concerns amongst some Catholics that religious and political tensions may develop into more significant conflict and persecution. They are stark reminders of the illicit nature of Catholics' religious lives and the dangers they faced if they were discovered to have protected priests, hosted Mass or owned Catholic books and artefacts.

However, when considering the effect of persecution on the Catholic communities of Wales, it is important to consider the finer nuances and subtleties of the complex relationship that existed between Catholics and their Protestant neighbours. The persecution that erupted along the borders of Wales in the late 1670s and their targeting which accompanied the 1688 Revolution, can be seen as a concerted effort by some elements of the Protestant community to express their fear and resentment of the Catholics living in their midst. However, it would be wrong to cast Catholics as mere victims in this situation. Firstly, it should be remembered that members of the Catholic yeomanry and gentry had launched violent assaults against their Protestant neighbours when they were prevented from celebrating their religion openly, threatening armed insurrection in 1605.[184] Secondly, it needs also to be noted that Catholics in many areas did not feel the need to always worship in a discreet manner and were sometimes brazenly provocative. Holywell's Catholics supported their shrine and the pilgrims that journeyed to it in a shockingly open manner, to the point where some missionary priests became concerned about the unwanted attention that might result.[185] Attempts to coerce their neighbours and tenants could also be seen as evidence of the disregard shown by some to the threat of arrest and

[183] Treowen is currently a hotel; http://www.treowen.co.uk/, accessed 26th September 2011.
[184] Jenkins, "A Welsh Lancashire?", pp. 176-18.
[185] Seguin, "Cures and Controversy in Early Modern Wales", pp. 12-17.

imprisonment. Bodenham Gunter's decision to install a wholly unsuitable candidate as minister in the living he controlled could be seen as indicative of a remarkable confidence in his ability to avoid drawing attention to his religious unorthodoxy.[186] In Treowen, even the journey to Mass seemed to be designed to infuriate local Anglicans. The Catholic congregation chose to walk through the parish churchyard at the same time as their neighbours were attending Anglican service.[187] Such behaviour, reported by hostile witnesses who regarded such behaviour as outrageous flouting of the country's laws, could be interpreted as attempts to exaggerate the issues of intergroup sectarian conflict and inflame the ire of the government. Tensions were increased further by reports of violent actions by members of the Catholic and church papist communities in order to avoid prosecutions. [188] Clearly, provocation and even violence were not excluded as means by which members of the Catholic gentry were prepared to operate.

As well as avoiding casting certain social groups as victims and denying them agency in the tensions that existed in wider Welsh society, it should be noted that many people living in parts of Wales were remarkably tolerant of the Catholic neighbours' religious practices. The lack of recusants presented before the courts would suggest that Monmouthshire magistrates, constables and deputy lieutenants chose to overlook the Catholic activities taking place around them. The existence of St Winifred's shrine at Holywell, speaks of the acceptance that was shown by the local community. It would seem that relationships between Catholics and Protestants could be remarkably civil. The vitriolic persecution experienced by some in Monmouthshire overshadows this more tolerant period and gives a false impression of the level of antagonism. Even

[186] NLW Church in Wales: Diocese of St Davids Episcopal, MS 11/1186.
[187] Trevor, *An abstract of several examinations*, p. 17.
[188] Trevor, *An abstract of several examinations*, pp. 17-19.

John Arnold, a rabid anti-papist in 1678, seems to have maintained relatively civil relations with one of the priests he would later arrest and help convict.[189]

Tolerance seem to have existed right up to the end of the seventeenth century, despite the crisis of the 1688 Revolution. In 1703, the former Catholic priest, Thomas Browne, alias Day, produced a description of his childhood and education in Flintshire for the Archbishop of Canterbury. In it he recorded how he could provide much information about one of his Protestant tutors, as he had encountered and conversed openly with him while travelling between Hawarden and Holywell. This meeting, where Browne states he openly identified himself to his former tutor, occurred while he was still as a priest of the Catholic Church. What makes this openness all the more surprising is that the tutor, one Humphrey Thomas, was curate of Hawarden at the time.[190]

The fact that such tolerance could be encountered by Catholics throughout the late seventeenth century, and that it appeared to have been exhibited by even those that would later persecute Catholics, is particularly interesting in its implications for the behaviour of the community. The level of persecution witnessed in the period 1678-80 and during the disturbances of the 1688 Revolution emerged after a period of significant forbearance towards Catholics. It could, therefore, be argued that the provocative behaviour of some wealthy Catholics in response to the rising political tensions in some areas, may have reflected more than just their individual personalities. It may also have been the product of a growth in confidence in the security of the community and a desire to maintain the political and economic position

[189] In his account of his arrest, trial and imprisonment, St David Lewis stated that he was surprised to be arrested by Arnold and his fellow priest-hunter, Charles Price, as he had counted them amongst his friends up until that point. Lewis also reported that Arnold was very civil towards Lewis when accommodating him in his home at Llanvihangel Crucorney; Lewis, *A narrative of the imprisonment and trial of Mr David Lewis*, pp. 1-2.
[190] LPL Miscellaneous Papers 1603-1715, MS 941/2.

they had acquired through the surprising acceptance of some of their Protestant neighbours.

Initial analysis of the structure and nature of the Catholic communities of Wales might suggest a group that occupied the fringes of wider society, living mainly in remote areas where their activities would attract little attention. Alternatively, they have been seen as a community dominated by the wealthy elite who could afford to support priests, pay fines and enforce Catholicism within their households and tenants. However, closer consideration reveals a group that played an important part in the political, cultural and social life of the country in the late seventeenth century. Far from being isolated within the largely Catholic parishes of upland Wales, significant populations could also be found in towns and villages. While it is true that Catholicism in Wales was concentrated in the counties that ran along the Marches, these communities cannot be fairly represented as being in rapid decline, fading into obscurity in the waning years of the seventeenth century. While the late seventeenth century presented major challenges for the Catholics of the region, it was also an era when their principal shrine was patronised by a king, and some Catholics found themselves in positions of real local power. Instead of viewing the Catholic population of the late seventeenth century as one that was in steady decline, we should perhaps consider it to have undergone major change, with periods of prosperity and difficulty.

It is of great importance to recognise that Catholics lived in socially diverse communities, interconnected by complex familial, economic and political ties. To simply attribute these bonds to the enforcing of religious views by a Catholic elite would be to ignore the sophistication of this important sub-division of Welsh society. There is a clear need to consider Catholics as forming and participating in numerous

communities based upon many different kinds of bonds ranging from the tangible connections of marriage to such elusive ideas as shared religious space. It is only through consideration of how these different bonded groups interacted that we can begin to appreciate how Welsh society functioned in a period of considerable upheaval.

The Catholic population of Wales was also witness to the problems of fragmentation and discord that have been observed in communities elsewhere in the British Isles. While those who wished to eradicate the Church of Rome from Wales may have sought to present Catholics as a united front attempting to wage a secret war on Protestant England, Catholics were often locked in conflict with each other as bitter as those they developed with Protestants. The formal division into laity and clergy, and into further groups of members and supporters of different orders, seems to have produced significant intra-group conflict. This is an important reminder that the Catholic communities of Wales, while lying on the edge of Christian Europe, were not immune to the political conflicts raging on the Continent.

Furthermore historians of English Catholicism have increasingly acknowledged the need to recognise a wider definition of Catholicism in early modern England. The have moved away from the traditional dichotomy between recusancy and church popery as it does not typify the religious behaviour of many Catholics.[191] Instead there has emerged a more complex picture in which Catholics lived as part of communities composed of both those able to resist the authorities' attempts to enforce religious orthodoxy and of those who chose to conform. The need to maintain access to and relations with those who did not share their religious beliefs, is an aspect of Welsh Catholicism that has received relatively little attention. The savagery of the

[191] Walsham, *Church Papists*, pp.73-75; McClain, *Lest we be Damned*, pp. 6-7.

anti-popish reaction in South Wales during the Popish Plot seems to have overshadowed the extent to which Catholics sought to negotiate their way through the legal prohibitions against, and exploit the opportunities afforded them by the numerous regime changes that took place. As a result, they continued to participate within wider political and social life at a parish and county level. It has also led to a focusing of attention on the fate of Catholicism in South Wales, ignoring how communities in North Wales maintained their religious practices and operated at Holywell, one of the most important British Catholic shrines.

Focus upon the persecution of Catholics in the period after the Restoration can easily lead to their depiction as passive victims. Such a viewpoint fails to reflect the often provocative behaviour of some Catholics, their proactive response to limitations placed upon them. It is also easy to envisage Catholicism in this period as increasingly irrelevant to the development of Welsh religious culture. Again, this perspective fails to acknowledge the complexities of life for Catholics living in the midst of an Anglican state and society. Clearly Catholics could live co-operatively or in conflict with those other religious groups that shared their parishes, towns and villages. Catholics could exploit these tensions to further their own ends, even against other Catholics. The projection of Catholicism's declining power and status in the modern era onto the seventeenth century is problematic and inaccurate. It can lead to misunderstandings as to the role of Catholics and their supporters within the ongoing political and social conflicts effecting Wales into the eighteenth century. It is crucial that we recognise that while Catholics living across Wales formed separate communities from the Protestant ones that surrounded them, they were far from separated. Their politics, religion and social relations remained vital, provocative and controversial even as the turbulence of the seventeenth century was drawing to a close.

Chapter Three
Chapels, Wells and Mountains: Catholic Sacred Spaces in Early Modern Wales

The early modern period witnessed rapid and significant change in the way that Christian populations across Europe conceived of and related to sacred spaces. Wales was no exception. The introduction of Protestantism led to the radical transformation of churches, and the destruction of many of the chapels and shrines that had been used for centuries as places of worship and centres of pilgrimage. By the second half of the seventeenth century, churches across the Principality had been stripped of medieval decorations, and Protestant services had long replaced the Mass. These changes marked the development of a new conception of churches as holy spaces. God was no longer believed to be physically present in the church during the Mass, saints and their relics were not venerated alongside the Trinity, and pilgrimage ceased to be promoted as a means of gaining divine assistance and forgiveness at the numerous shrines that dotted the landscape.

By the second half of the seventeenth century, Wales' Catholic minority had, over the course of several generations, developed new ways to observe their faith and places in which to worship. It is this aspect of Catholic life that will be the focus of this chapter. It will consider the difficulties faced by Welsh Catholics as they continued to worship despite their physical isolation from their Church. This chapter will describe the various ways in which sacred space was used by Welsh Catholics, and discuss how and why such places were seen as holy, as well as what they meant to the Catholics that used them. It will also discuss the way in which historians of Welsh religion have interpreted the significance of holy wells and shrines. The interpretations proposed in some of the most recent studies of early modern sacred space across Europe will be applied to Catholic sacred space in late seventeenth-

century Wales. However, it will also argue that there is a need to seek deeper explanations through the application of theories drawn from anthropology and environmental psychology to understand how sacred spaces are created as well as their importance to the communities that used them. Finally, this chapter will propose that there is a need to understand sacred space as fulfilling key spiritual, ritual and personal needs for the Catholic population. Through its consideration of a rather neglected area of early modern religious life in Wales, this chapter will seek to illustrate how the Catholic community remained a vital and dynamic religious group during this period of the country's history.

Wales enjoys a variety of Christian sacred spaces, ranging from man-made, formally consecrated chapels, to physical landmarks, such as mountains and holy springs. Many of these places of religious significance have been used for many centuries, some possibly having associations with the pre-Christian and even pre-Roman eras. Even in relatively small areas of the country, a number of different sites can be found, many of which came to be used by Catholics in the aftermath of the Reformation. However, this aspect of early modern Catholicism has only recently begun to be explored by historians.[1] Some of the wider studies of European sacred space have included examinations of this aspect of Welsh religious life, and have done much to shed some light on a previously neglected area of the region's religious history.[2]

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[1] Recent studies of Catholic sacred space in Europe include F. E. Dolan, 'Gender and the "Lost" Spaces of Catholicism', *JIH*, 32, 4, 2002, pp. 641-665; L. McClain, 'Without Church, Cathedral, or Shrine: The Search for Religious Space among Catholics in England, 1559-1625', *SCJ*, 33, 2, 2002, pp. 381-399; W. Coster and A. Spicer (eds), *Sacred Space in Early Modern Europe*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005); A. Spicer and S. Hamilton (ed.), *Defining the holy: sacred space in medieval and early modern Europe*, (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2005); A. Walsham, *The Reformation of the Landscape: Religion, Identity and Memory in Early Modern Britain and Ireland*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2011).

[2] For details see F. Jones, *The Holy Wells of Wales*, (Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 1954); G. Williams, "Wales and the Reformation", in his *Welsh Reformation Essays*, (Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 1967) pp. 11-38; J. and C. Bord, *Sacred Waters: Holy Wells and Water Lore in Britain*

However, it is crucial that historians develop a greater understanding of how these ancient sites were defined as sacred and how Catholics in the early modern period related to them, as they played a major part in the community's religious life. Without access to churches, these often remote chapels and shrines were the only places where Catholic worship could take place.

Of considerable importance to the Welsh Catholic community, and of particular historical interest, are the numerous holy wells that are found across the region. Holy wells were, and remain, an important aspect of Welsh spiritual life, many being used since the medieval period and even earlier. They are particularly prevalent in Wales and Ireland, with England and Scotland having some surviving holy wells. Despite their unusual nature and the wide variety of rituals that were practiced at them, these wells have received only scant attention from historians.[3] However, despite the fundamental importance of sacred spaces to any religious group, the lack of attention given to this aspect of Catholicism is perhaps indicative of hagiographic and martyrological trends that played a significant role in Welsh Catholic history into the mid-twentieth century. The history of Catholicism has suffered particularly from an over-emphasis on the undoubted suffering of Catholics at the hands of their Protestant

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and Ireland, (London, Granada, 1985); M. R. Lewis, "The Pilgrimage to St. Michael Mount: Catholic Continuity in Wales", *JWEH*, Vol. 8, 1991, pp. 51-4; G. H. Jenkins, *The Foundations of Modern Wales, 1642-1780*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1991); G. Williams, *Wales and the Reformation*, (Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 1997) pp. 26-7, 280; T. John and N. Rees, *Pilgrimage: A Welsh Perspective*, (Llandysul, Gomer, 2002); C. M. Seguin, "Cures and Controversy in Early Modern Wales: The Struggle to Control St. Winifred's Well", *NAJWS*, Vol. 3, No. 2, 2003, pp. 1-17; G. Williams, "St Winifred's Well: Ffynnon Wenfrewi", *FHSJ*, 36, 2003, pp. 32-51; A. Walsham, "Holywell: contesting sacred space in post-Reformation Wales", in Coster and Spicer, *Sacred Space*, pp. 211-36; R. E. Scully, S.J., "St. Winefride's Well: The Significance and Survival of a Welsh Catholic Shrine from the Early Middle Ages to the Present Day", in M. Cormack (ed.), *Saints and Their Cults in the Atlantic World*, (Columbia, University of South Carolina Press, 2007), pp. 202-228.

[3] Many of the studies have been produced either by antiquarians or folklorists or as guidebooks for the general public. For details see Jones, *The Holy Wells of Wales*; Bord and Bord, *Sacred Water*; P. Davies, *Sacred Springs: In Search of the Holy Wells and Spas of Wales*, (Llanfoist, Blorenge Books, 2003); P. Cope, *Holy Wells: Wales: A Photographic Journey*, (Bridgend, Seren, 2008). The few academic studies that have been produced include Seguin, "Cures and Controversy"; Walsham, "Holywell"; Scully, "St. Winefride's Well".

tormentors, at the expense of genuine, unbiased enquiry into the nature of early modern British Catholicism. As a result, it was antiquarians and folklorists, rather than historians, who made some of the earliest attempts to examine the history of the religious cults and practices that centred on these shrines.

Early attempts to produce a more balanced, historical understanding of the nature of Catholicism were rightly focused on surveying Catholic practices and modes of thought, and challenging some of the long-held assumptions about those who chose to resist the efforts of the reformers. Much of this work concerned the most obvious aspects of Catholic ritual, with little consideration of the community's use of sacred space. In his seminal studies of early modern Catholicism, Bossy confines his consideration of sacred space to the venues used for hosting Masses. He asserts that during the closing decades of the sixteenth century, the Catholic gentry began to formalise their resistance to the Established Church, ceased to attend Protestant services and began to construct chapels and specialised rooms to host the Mass. This domesticated Catholic worship and led to the incorporation of ritual into the running of the household.[4] However, it is important to note that Bossy's consideration of Catholicism focused on religious behaviour, rather than the beliefs that inspired those behaviours.[5] He describes early modern Catholicism as 'a complex of social practices rather than a religion of internal conviction', a set of rituals, rather than an intellectualised, deeply analysed, personal faith.[6] As a result of adopting this view of Catholicism, his analysis of sacred space was primarily concerned with external behaviour during Mass, rather than the affective meaning of the ceremony.[7]

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[4] J. Bossy, 'The Character of Elizabethan Catholicism', *PP*, 21, 1962, p. 40; J. Bossy, *The English Catholic Community, 1570-1850*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1975), pp. 126-7.
[5] Idem, *English Catholic Community*, p. 108.
[6] Idem, "Character of Elizabethan Catholicism", p. 41.
[7] Idem, *English Catholic Community*, pp. 126-7, 129, 131.

In their analysis of Catholic sacred sites, Welsh historians have also tended to focus on the activities of observed at holy wells and shrines, with limited discussion of their significance. As a result, these rituals have been interpreted as 'the remnants of folk religion which had been handed down for centuries'.[8] It could be argued that this failure to recognise and discuss the importance of Catholic sacred space arises from the way in which Catholicism has been depicted by historians of the Welsh Reformation. In his many articles and books on the religious changes occurring in Wales during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Sir Glanmor Williams has argued that the Welsh were far from a devout people.[9] Instead, he suggests that the continued existence of these shrines were evidence of the failure of Christianity to displace an older polytheistic religious culture by mid-sixteenth century.

The view that worship at holy wells and other shrines are examples of pre-Christian survival or folk traditions echoed the assertions of folklorists and antiquarians in their surveys from the seventeenth through to the early twentieth centuries. Unfortunately, while these accounts are invaluable in giving the historian insight into what occurred at these wells, analysis of the meaning and significance of these activities is not always as academically rigorous as might be desired. The rituals that were observed at holy wells, shrines and chapels have been considered as having no link to the doctrines of any of the Christian churches that have existed in Wales. An exception to this is Jones' study of Wales' holy wells, which provides detailed descriptions of the rituals and beliefs that centred on the wells and attempts to explain their origins. It describes the history of well veneration from pre-Christian times through to the early twentieth century.[10] While Jones does on occasion miss the

[8] Williams, *Wales and the Reformation*, p. 280.
[9] Ibid, p. 27.
[10] Jones, *Holy Wells*, pp. 12-137.

continued Christian use of some of the holy wells, but his work provides one of the most comprehensive accounts of a fairly unique aspect of Welsh religious life.[11]

Older historians of Welsh religion have not always interpreted the changing use and significance of sacred spaces in the light of the evolving cultural relationship between society and the landscape. However, this interaction has received greater consideration in wider European religious history. Historians working on both early modern Catholicism and Protestantism have taken an interest in the way in which different religious communities thought about and used sacred space. In their collection of essays on this subject, Spicer and Coster make the important point that new enquiries into how sacred space was used and abused during the early modern period have challenged long-standing assumptions about the Reformation and Counter-Reformation as regimes that destroyed or preserved sacred space.[12] It would seem that study of the physical spaces in which worship took place has provided early modern historians with a new understanding of the nature of religious change occurring during this tempestuous period of Europe's history.

As a result of this increased interest in early modern sacred space generally, greater attention has begun to be paid to the way in which early modern Catholics created and used sacred space in the British Isles in the aftermath of the Reformation. These studies have drawn attention to the complex ideas and social behaviours that helped Catholics to recreate sacred spaces that had been lost to them as a result of the Reformation. Interestingly, they have also pointed towards the importance of both the

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[11] Jones describes St Anthony's Well at Llanstefan as a wishing well. In fact, it is still used by pilgrims, who leave flowers and shells at the shrine. Similarly he fails to describe the continued use of St Peter's Well at Bishopston as a place of pilgrimage, and does not identify the existence of St John's Well on the same site. Photographs of the wells of SS Peter and John can be found in photographic plates 13-17.

[12] W. Coster and A. Spicer, "Introduction: the dimensions of sacred space in Reformation Europe", in Coster and Spicer, *Sacred Space*, pp. 4-7.

laity and the priesthood in the construction of sacred spaces.[13] Furthermore, Catholics found alternative sacred spaces in a surprisingly wide variety of locations, to replace the churches, monasteries and priories that had been lost. McClain has documented the use of domestic environments, prisons, courtrooms and gallows where priests were martyred.[14] The fact that such differing environments as ruined mountain-top shrines to lonely prison dungeons could come to be regarded as holy places has been shown in many of these more recent studies to be part of a developed theology of sacred space. The distinction between sacred and profane could be drawn in many different ways, ranging from physical demarcation to their association with subtle, even internalised patterns of behaviour that allowed the believer to get closer to the divine.[15]

While McClain has analysed what spaces Catholics used for worship and how they were distinguished, Dolan has considered what effect the development of new sacred spaces had upon Catholicism, particularly the role of women. She argues that the association between Catholicism and the feminine had already formed in the Protestant mind because of its perceived "otherness". However, this linking of women and allegiance to Rome was further bolstered by the cultural changes wrought by the domestication of Catholicism.[16] As sacred space was ousted from the parish church, it moved into private chapels and houses. Catholic women took on new responsibilities as husbands often outwardly conformed in order to maintain their families' social position, while their wives and sisters preserved the family's Catholicism, even going as far as sheltering and protecting priests.[17]

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[13] Walsham, "Holywell", *passim*.
[14] McClain, "Without Cathedral, Church or Shrine", pp. 386-9, 390-7.
[15]Ibid, pp. 383.
[16] Dolan, "Gender and the "Lost" Spaces of Catholicism", pp. 643-4.
[17] Ibid, p. 654.

The accommodation of sacred space within the homes of wealthy Catholics was also the focus of Williams' study. He argues that most of these private chapels and converted rooms and attics would not have been formally consecrated in the way that pre-Reformation churches were.[18] Yet, despite their apparent inferiority, they still served as important venues for the performance of Mass by itinerant priests. The requirement that missionary priests wear their vestments and use proper massing equipment during their services, reflected not only the Tridentine Church's unwillingness to make allowances for the danger to priests of carrying such equipment with them, but also the prime importance of these consecrated objects in imbuing a space with the presence of God.[19]

While recent historical enquiry into the creation and utilisation of sacred space in early modern Europe generally has highlighted its importance in developing a well-rounded understanding of religious life in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, such ideas are only beginning to be explored in studies of sacred space in Wales. The few studies that have been made tended to concentrated on the holy wells, and have not linked them with other kinds of Catholic sacred space and culture in the region. However, the research produced by Alexandra Walsham and Colleen M. Seguin both sought to place the Catholic sacred space of Wales within a broader cultural and political context. Perhaps unsurprisingly given its prominence in wider British Catholic culture, St Winifred's Well at Holywell has been the focus of much of the research produced on this aspect of religious life in Wales. Walsham's discussions of Holywell, and of the role of the miraculous in the Counter-Reformation mission, has rightly drawn attention to the way in which the shrine became an important centre for

[18] Williams, "Forbidden Sacred Spaces in Reformation England" in Spicer and Hamilton (ed.), *Defining the holy*, p. 97.
[19] Ibid, p. 103.

the priests operating in Wales during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[20] She also examines how the miraculous events that were supposed to have occurred there were incorporated into the Tridentine doctrines that were promoted by the missionary priests.[21] In her study of the struggle to control St Winifred's Well during the seventeenth century, Seguin draws attention to the complex patterns of religious belief and local politics that could emerge in the vicinities of these sacred spaces, with the shrine to St Winifred becoming a centre for feuding and rivalry within the deeply divided Catholic community.[22]

While the academic focus on Holywell can be seen as a reflection of the shrine's importance Catholic communities across England and Wales, there is a need to recognise the cultural significance of the numerous smaller well sites that continued to flourish in South and Mid-Wales. These were used by men, women, laity and clergy from a wide variety of different socio-economic backgrounds. Such sites were not simply the preserve of ignorant peasants as has been depicted by some historians, but also members of the gentry and missionary priests.[23] Examination of who visited and used these sites provides the opportunity to consider the experiences of the poor, the illiterate and women, as well as literate and the wealthy men.

The religious lives of less powerful members of early modern society are often the most difficult for historians to access. In her highly influential examination of the relationship between Britain's landscape, architecture and religious culture, Walsham points to the ample evidence that the ruined, neglecting, vandalised and illicit shrines and chapels that survived beyond the Reformation, were frequented by pilgrims and

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[20] Walsham, "Holywell", pp. 222-239.
[21] Idem, "Miracles and the Counter-Reformation Mission to England", *HJ*, 46, 4, 2003, p. 799
[22] Seguin, "Cures and Controversy", pp. 10-5.
[23] Williams, "Wales and the Reformation", 1967, pp. 21-22; Williams, *Wales and the Reformation*, p. 280.

worshippers from all levels of early modern society.[24] However, she acknowledges that the textual and graphical accounts that have survived documenting the use of these spaces and landmarks, were produced by and for learned clergy and gentlemen. Yet, they do provide us 'indirect and imperfect access' to the interpretations and experiences of the illiterate or the disempowered who are not generally represented in the manuscript and print record.[25] In their often critical reports on those attending these shrines, Protestant writers described the pilgrims as 'vulgar' and identified them as being men and women of all ages.[26] Walsham also shows that the demographic variety in the Catholic communities that used these sites was not limited to particular geographic areas. Shrines across northern England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales were all frequented by those drawn from across the social spectrum.[27] The physical landscape and the atmospheric monuments it contained, continued to shape and be shaped by men and women's conceptions of the sacred and its relationship to place. Such spaces demonstrated the degree to which the changes to the buildings and countryside wrought by the Reformation impacted people's lives across the social and religious spectrum.

Despite the evidence highlighted by Walsham and others that the sacred spaces that survived the Reformation were important beyond the confines of the gentry, their social significance within Welsh Catholic culture has remained obscure.[28] The lack of academic interest in Welsh sacred spaces is perhaps indicative of the view that early modern Catholicism more generally, was a ritualistic religion, dominated by the gentry

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[24] Walsham, *The Reformation of the Landscape*, p. 166.
[25] Ibid, p. 15.
[26] BL, Harley MS 7386, fo. 220[r]; Walsham, *The Reformation of the Landscape*, p. 171.
[27] Ibid, pp. 166-189.
[28] Glanmor Williams makes infrequent references to the shrines in his studies of the Reformation in Wales beyond his study of St Winifred's Well. Similarly, G.H. Jenkins does not explicitly reference the shrines and wells of Wales in his discussion of the evolution of Wales' religious culture. Jones' examination of Wales' holy wells is generally more developed, it to simply identifies wells as centres of casual folk traditions.

and practised almost exclusively in their private chapels and houses.[29] It is an argument that seems to have gained considerable support in Wales and has informed most of the studies of the region's sacred space produced in the post 1945 era.

The lack of recent scholarly investigation of sacred sites beyond Holywell, has meant that discussion of the less well known sacred sites of Wales are framed within a discussion of these places as sites of superstition or survivals of pre-Christian activities. Glanmor Williams did discuss the local shrines generally and suggested that 'they have usually been mistakenly taken as the basis for postulating strongly Catholic sympathies in Wales.'[30] He asserts that 'the relation of these vestiges to Catholic dogma was, however, very tenuous. They are far removed from the Council of Trent and the Catholic Reformation ... Some of the practices were as much pagan as they were Christian.'[31] Even in an account of the Reformation produced in the late 1990s Williams continued to view practices such as vigils for the dead, veneration of relics and pilgrimages as 'remnants of folk religion'.[32] This directly contradicts the more nuanced view that has emerged since the turn of the millennium. Walsham's study of the relationship between the miraculous and the Counter-Reformation points out that the post-Tridentine Church did not simply curtail the practices of the medieval Church, but often incorporated and reinterpreted elements of these traditions in line with the decrees issued during and after the Council of Trent.[33]

Williams' views of these shrines seems reminiscent of the theory of cultural survivals that was proposed by folklorists in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The argument that the rituals performed at holy wells and sacred sites were

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[29] Williams, "Wales and the Reformation", 1967, pp. 21-22; Williams, *Wales and the Reformation*, p. 280.
[30] Williams, "Wales and the Reformation", 1967, p. 21.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Idem, *Wales and the Reformation*, p. 280.
[33] Walsham, "Miracles and the Counter-Reformation", pp. 813-4.

"survivals" from an earlier, pre-Christian past was first proposed in the seventeenth century.[34] However, as Walsham has noted, many seventeenth century antiquarians found themselves torn between their desire to record the details of folk traditions for posterity and their religious conviction that any forms of Catholic worship were superstitious.[35] Some endeavoured to document the practices they observed and were told about, as a means of exposing the manipulative practices of the medieval clergy and contemporary Catholic Church.[36] While these attempts to persuade their readers ran the risk of drawing attention to continued devotion to the rituals of the Catholic Church, they seem to have had a significant influence upon the interpretations propounded by folklorists of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, particularly in some authors' discussions of holy wells in Ireland.[37] However, Welsh writers were also affected by these cultural blinkers. Pennant reflected similar views in his description of the continued use of St Winifred's Well during his tour of North Wales in the late 1700s. He dismissively described those he observed using the well as 'in deep devotion up to their chins for hours'. He suggests that pilgrims had died as result of the journeys they undertook and the rituals that they observed at the ruined shrine.[38]

For modern historians and folklorists, the identification of such practices as folk traditions and superstitions, seems to have been the result of an increased awareness of the legacy of druidic worship that was often associated with the holy wells and the sacred landscape more generally. Walsham has gone as far as to suggest that the emergence of an anthropological interest in these kinds on "unorthodox" practices and beliefs, reflected both an interest in the traditional belief systems of

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[34] Williams, *Wales and the Reformation*, p. 280.
[35] Walsham, "Miracles and the Counter-Reformation", p. 476
[36] Ibid, pp. 480-484.
[37] Ibid, pp. 545-555.
[38] T. Pennant, *The History of the Parishes of Whiteford and Holywell*, (Mold, Library and Museum Service Clwyd County Council, (1796) 1988), p.230.

Britain, but also a failure to engage with rituals and creeds that originated outside the Anglican tradition.[39]

The relationship between the Christian rituals and pilgrimage observed at these sites and the religious practices that pre-dated the establishment of Christianity are more complicated than is suggested by the "survivals" theory. Several of the holy wells are associated with elements of rituals or beliefs that do derive from earlier, pre-Christian practices.[40] However, to suggest that the continued use of holy wells as sites for the veneration of saints and all the rituals that were observed at them are simply the continuation of pre-Christian practices that have lost their religious meaning, seems rather reductionist. To use terms like pagan to describe these associations with druidic religious practices adds greater confusion to these descriptions. Pagan as a term has been also been adopted to describe a wide variety of modern beliefs that claim to be drawn from ancient polytheistic traditions. The fact that such wide variations in beliefs and practices are captured under the umbrella term of Paganism means that it can prove a confusing and unhelpful label when considering the nature of beliefs and rituals that became attached to sacred sites in Wales. To avoid confusion and to maintain linguistic clarity as to which religious groups are being discussed, this chapter will refer to ancient religious practices as pre-Christian or druidic as distinct from modern, religious practices observed at some sites by the Neo-Pagan community. Where sites are still in use as foci of religious practices, indication will be given as to whether this relates to the Catholic or Neo-Pagan worship.

The mixing of religious practices that were associated with Welsh shrines seems to have been the cause of Williams' description of these sites as part of a 'folk

[39] Walsham, *The Reformation of the Landscape*, p. 473
[40] Jones, *Holy Wells*, p. 108

religion' rather than a Christian tradition.[41] One example of the absorption of pre-Christian practices into Christian worship at these sites can be seen in the association of many wells with human skulls and heads. Both St Winifrid's Well and the holy well on Ramsey Island were said to have originated in the decapitation of a saint.[42] At Ffynnon Deilo pilgrims consumed the water of the well by drinking from the brain-pan of a skull said to belong to St Teilo. Teilo was said to have ordered that his skull be taken to the parish of Llandilo Llwydiarth, where it could be used as a relic. It passed into the care of the Mathew family, and then into the hands of the Melchior family, who took part in the ritual of drinking from the skull.[43] The importance of heads on the religious culture of the sacred wells seems to have continued even to the present day. As can be seen in photographic plate 7, the request for protection for sick or missing loved ones associated with the sacred wells of St Peter and St John in Bishopston has been further ritualised through the placing of clay models of the heads of missing or sick individuals in a tree near the wells. Pilgrims to the wells leave these effigies as part of their attempts to secure intercession for the loved ones represented in the figures.[44]

While the use of a skull as a drinking cup could be argued to be an exaggerated element of the Catholic tradition of relic veneration, the use of head effigies at Bishopston is difficult to locate within Catholic doctrine, and could be part of older, non-Christian practices that have been incorporated into the request for saintly intercession. Taken together, the repeated references to heads in the mythology, martyrology and rituals of the Welsh holy wells point to their having an association

[41] Williams, *Wales and the Reformation*, p. 280.
[42] Robert, Prior of Shrewsbury, *The Admirable Life of S. Wenefride, Virgin, Martyr, Abbesse and Patronesse of Wales*, trans. by John Falconer (London, 1635), p. 52; John and Rees, Pilgrimage, p. 124
[43] Jones, *Holy Wells*, p. 116; Jones and Rees, *Pilgrimage*, pp. 74-5.
[44] Details of these offerings can be seen in photographic plate 7.

with pre-Christian worship. Archaeological excavations have found skulls placed into the wells dating from the Celtic periods of Welsh history.[45] Clearly these sometimes prominent and useful features in the local landscape had a powerful influence on religious life in the region before the era of Christian worship.

Further confusion over the nature of religious culture associated with these sites has resulted from the fact that they are often located near to monoliths and stone circles used in druidic worship.[46] One particularly striking example of this can be found on Cefn Bryn on the Gower Peninsula. Located only metres from the Iron Age tombs of Arthur's Stone and the Great Cairn, can be found the now neglected and largely forgotten Ffynnon Fair. The well was dedicated to the Virgin, and offerings of pins were thrown into it. If the pins already in the well rose to meet the new offering then it was believed that the request for intercession had been successful. Cefn Bryn is still a holy site for some Neo-pagans. However, Ffynnon Fair has lost its religious resonance over the generations and is now little more than the source of an anonymous brook.[47] A similar pattern of association between monoliths and Catholic shrines can be seen in Monmouthshire. St Anne's Well, also known locally as the Virtuous Well, is found near the small village of Trellech and a series of ancient standing stones called Harold's Stones by the locals. It is also said that these stones aligned with the Skirrid Mountain and the sunrise on the Winter Solstice, suggesting that this region contained more than one Catholic shrine that had an older, pre-Christian lineage.[48]

It would seem that for Williams and others, the use of these sites by religious groups that pre-date the arrival of Christianity, combined by the transmutation of some of these druidic traditions within Christian practice, effects their status as truly

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[45] Jones and Rees, *Pilgrimage*, p. 124.
[46] Ibid, p. 94.
[47] For details of this well see plates 18-22; Ibid, p. 94.
[48] R. Palmer, *The Folklore of (Old) Monmouthshire*, (Little Logaston, Logaston Press, 2000).

Catholic shrines in the early modern period. However, as with much of Christian worship drawn from other religions, the reason why the well or shrine is sacred has been translated into Christian mythology and has very little to do with the Celtic traditions from which it emerged. The definition of the well or mountain as sacred was no longer the result of its connection with gods or spirits, but because of its association with a saint, many of whom were actual historical figures. The complex relationship between Wales' druidic, pre-Christian past and the religious culture that emerged during the medieval and early modern periods, highlights the importance of developing an analytical approach to the kinds of ritual behaviour that was recorded at Welsh shrines. Consideration of the meaning and importance of such rituals to the individual and the community is profoundly important in discerning the changing nature of these sites and their position within the contemporary religious culture.

The labelling of these small shrines as centres for folk traditions seems to have contributed to the view that pilgrimages to the holy wells and shrines were habitual. While Williams does not call such practices superstition, his views seem rather close to it.[49] Jenkins regards them explicitly as 'superstitions and magical' in nature.[50] While contemporary Protestant sources may have asserted that rituals of the kind found in these sacred spaces resulted from ignorance rather than genuine religious conviction, historians need to be more tentative in their investigations into the nature of early modern religious conviction and the meaning of ritual. As Muir points out, defining what ritual is and what it does presents the historian and the social scientist with a number of problems.[51] Is ritual strictly religious in nature, or is it more appropriate to see it as part of wider human life?

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[49] Williams, "Wales and the Reformation", 1967, pp. 21-22; Idem, *Wales and the Reformation*, 1997, p. 280.
[50] Jenkins, *The Foundations of Modern Wales, 1642-1780*, p. 43.
[51] E. Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University of Press, 1997), p. 3.

Bossy depicted ritual as a primary form of worship.[52] He suggested that religious practices such as ritual fasting, feasting, christenings and the Mass were easily incorporated into the domestic life of the Catholic gentry.[53] However, he did not see these rituals as manifestations of a personalised and internalised conviction in the same way as the Protestant gentry who attended services in the parish church. Instead, the Catholic gentry's commitment to the Church of Rome reflected traditional allegiances and the power it gave them over the clergy that relied on them for support.[54] In recent years, historians have tended to move away from this view of Catholic ritual, instead seeing it as an important part of Catholicism, even in hostile, Protestant countries.[55] However, historians of Welsh Catholicism have continued to promote the view that the rituals like pilgrimage, bathing or drinking from holy wells and attending Masses, were observed out of habit rather than genuine, personal devotion.[56]

This view does not reflect the reality of early modern Catholics' experiences. The majority of Catholics would have encountered a priest, confessed and received the sacraments only rarely during the course of their lives. The problem of gaining access to priests would have exacerbated in remote regions like Wales, which attracted fewer priests than the wealthier and more hospitable south of England.[57] Instead, Catholics had to sustain their faith through different means. The reading of devotional material and private prayer acted as mechanisms by which the laity could continue to express their devotion in the absence of regular access to the clergy. It is also important to

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[52] Bossy, *English Catholic Community*, pp. 108, 111-2.
[53] Idem, "Character of Elizabethan Catholicism", p. 40.
[54] Ibid, p. 41.
[55] McClain, "Without Church Cathedral or Shrine", pp. 383; Idem, *Lest We Be Damned*, pp. 6-7, 29-30.
[56] Williams, "Wales and the Reformation", 1967, pp. 17, 20-22; Idem, *Wales and the Reformation*, 1997, p. 27, 280.
[57] Holt suggests that between the 1670s and 1747, only 8 or 9 priests are known to have been based at Powis Castle and served Montgomeryshire; T. G. Holt, "Jesuits in Montgomeryshire 1670-1873", *JWRH*, Vol. 1, 1993, p. 66.

consider that many of the Catholic communities' sacred spaces were located in remote, out-of-the-way locations both out of necessity and tradition. Journeys to seek cures at a holy well or pilgrimages to holy shrines often meant an arduous journey that took them a long way from home. In some cases Catholics even travelled from outside Wales in significant pilgrimages to receive Communion and pray at some Welsh shrines. In the aftermath of the Gunpowder Plot, real concern was raised that the plan to destroy the Protestant government had been hatched and developed during a pilgrimage that stopped at the homes of a number of the conspirators and the priests, John Gerard and Henry Garnet.[58] The pilgrims had travelled from southern England to the relatively remote corner of Flintshire where the shrine was located, suggesting the degree to which such sites could draw devotion from well beyond their surrounding locality. Such journeys were not without their dangers as the larger and better known shrines, like St Winifred's Well, were also subject to scrutiny by the Protestant authorities who monitored who was attending Mass and bathing in the waters.[59] If visiting such places was merely habitual, then it would appear that the Catholic community of Wales and elsewhere in the British Isles had many dangerous and rather demanding habits.

It would seem that the behaviour at many of the most prominent and well used of the late seventeenth-century shrines can be understood as ritual expressions of the Catholic doctrine. Belief in the saints as intercessors who could appeal to God to affect the course of events in the physical world remained an important part of Church doctrine. Such a belief provided even the poorest members of the community with a means of communing with the divine, as well as giving a sense of control when faced

[58] Walsham, *The Reformation of the Landscape*, p. 202.
[59] Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, *Charles I, 1629-1631*, Vol. CLI, No. 13, p. 87

with apparently incurable disease, misfortune or infertility. Furthermore, it is important to note that many of these shrines were utilised and maintained by members of the missionary clergy. While the Protestant writers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were keen to emphasise the more unusual religious practices that could be found in some shrines in Wales, many were simply used for prayer and as centres for Mass.[60] These practices undoubtedly fit within any model of orthodox Catholic ritual of the period.

Perhaps most significantly, the missionary clergy and even the papacy itself were keen to exploit the evangelising possibilities of these sites and acted to promote them. Walsham has drawn attention to the degree to which Jesuit priests operating out of Holywell collected and circulated accounts of the miraculous cures of the faithful, and punishments of those who sought to despoil the shrine in an attempt to inspire devotion and win converts.[61] Even at less prominent shrines, the active engagement of the Catholic Church with these spaces was in evidence. The Skirrid Mountain was of great significance to the community of Monmouthshire and the southern March, but was not of the same calibre as Holywell. Yet in 1676, a papal dispensation was awarded by Clement X granting complete remission of sins to all those that visited its ancient ruined chapel and prayed for the end of heresies in the land and the return to the Roman Church.[62] The complexity of the relationship between these sacred spaces and the Catholic Church, and the apparent willingness of those who used them to risk punishment for their pilgrimages, would suggest that the rituals that occurred at these shrines should be interpreted as physical demonstrations of a belief in the power and importance of a particular physical space due to its apparent holiness.

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[60] Walsham, *The Reformation of the Landscape*, pp. 482-3.
[61] Idem, "Holywell", pp. 222-239.
[62] M. R. Lewis, "The Pilgrimage to St Michael's Mount", pp. 51-4.

As well examining the history of these shrines, it is important to consider reasons why these sites had become sanctified to Welsh Catholics. Many of the studies that have examined this aspect of Catholicism's relationship with the physical landscape, rely on the theories of the historian of religion and philosopher, Mircea Eliade. Eliade argues that sacred space exists in opposition to and is defined by profane space. He asserts that for the religious the world is not homogenous, but is divided into the sacred and the profane. Sacred space is seen as more real, consistent and structured because of its proximity to the "reality" of the divine world.[63] He suggests that the sanctity of a space can be realised in a number of different ways. Miracles or unusual events believed to have occurred at a particular place can be interpreted as evidence of God's favouring that site. Alternatively, animals or sacred objects can be used to identify whether a place is holy. These miracles, holy objects and animals can be described as *hierophanies* signifying the manifestation of the sacred. They distinguished particular places from their profane surroundings and gives structure and definition to the world by indicating the particular place where the spiritual world interacted with the physical.[64]

The dichotomy of sacred and profane that Eliade describes has been utilised by several historians to elucidate the conceptual nature of sacred space.[65] It has proved very useful in identifying how sacred space was created in early modern Europe and its significance to the wider community. The conception of a world divided between the sacred and the profane is extremely helpful in explaining why particular sites came to be identified as sacred as a result of their association with saints and miracles, or how they were sanctified by the performance of rituals. Yet it is important to recognise

[63] M. Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion,* trans. W. R. Trask, (Reinbek, Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag, 1957), pp. 20-1.
[64] Ibid, pp. 27-8.
[65] Williams, "Forbidden Sacred Spaces in Reformation England", pp. 95.

that the concept of hierophany does not explain all aspects of sacred space in Wales during this period. There was clearly a personal commitment inspired by these shrines, demonstrated by the determination of individual Catholics to continue to use them despite persecution by local Protestants and great personal hardships. This suggests that there may also be a more individual basis for the sanctity of these particular places.

In their studies of sacred space, Mazumdar and Mazumdar have highlighted how sacred places vary in scale, accessibility and in the level of personal commitment they inspire.[66] As they rightly observe, a sacred city or land inspires very different kinds of religious feelings in the individual to a personal shrine in a home.[67] While they discuss and support Eliade's view of the role of hierophany in establishing a space as sacred, they also point to the importance of deep emotional and religious experiences in maintaining the individual's commitment to a particular sacred space.[68] They also make the important point that even larger and less personal kinds of sacred space, such as sacred cities or countries, are described and envisioned in ways that are designed to inspire deeply personal emotions. Jerusalem and Israel are envisioned by Jews as their spiritual home, and the focus of annual prayers for their return, while Rome is the seat of the Pope, spiritual father of the Catholic faith.[69] While Eliade's conception of a dichotomy between the sacred and the profane is very useful in elucidating the way in which sacred spaces emerge and are sanctified, the importance of personal emotional connections also explain why individuals returned to these sites time and again, despite their remoteness and the risk of persecution.

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[66] S. Mazumdar and S. Mazumdar, "Sacred Space and Place Attachment", *JEP*, 3, 13, 1993, *passim*; Idem, "Religion and Place Attachment: A Study of Sacred Places", *JEP*, 24, 2004, *passim*.
[67] S. Mazumdar and S. Mazumdar, "Sacred Space and Place Attachment", *JEP*, 3, 13, 1993, pp. 234.
[68] Ibid, pp. 232, 237-8.
[69] Idem, "Religion and Place Attachment: A Study of Sacred Places", *JEP*, 24, 2004, pp. 390-1

The variety of holy spaces that existed in seventeenth-century Wales meant that the attachment of sacredness to particular physical locations could be the result of a number of reasons. The establishment of Protestantism as the state religion meant that Catholics in the British Isles were faced with different challenges to their co-religionists on the Continent in locating and maintaining sacred spaces. While Catholics living in southern and central Europe were faced with the problem of how to reclaim churches and shrines that had fallen into disrepair or been destroyed, Catholics living in Protestant states had to find alternative places of worship.[70] In the aftermath of the Reformation, the loss of parish churches, chantries and monasteries as the traditional locations for worship forced Welsh Catholics to define the relationship between the physical landscape and the divine in new ways. By the second half of the seventeenth century they had found several different types of venue suitable for their religious requirements, ranging from newly created and consecrated chapels in towns and in the homes of the Catholic gentry, to traditional sacred wells that had been used for generations. Some of these sites filled the void left by the loss of parish churches as venues for the administration of the sacraments, while others were used for the curing of diseases or the veneration of saints and relics. Examination of these chapels and shrines from across the Principality reveal the key similarities and differences in the personal connections that individuals had with these spaces, and the hierophanies that defined them as sacred at a community level.

Perhaps the most basic and widely available kinds of sacred space available to Welsh Catholics was the home. In the privacy of their own homes Catholics could engage in prayer and personal devotion, as well as read literature produced by the exile community living on the Continent. In his *A Short Rule of Good Life*, Robert

[70] Idem, *Lest We Be Damned*, pp. 37-39.

Southwell instructed Catholics on the importance of creating sacred space within a domestic setting. Southwell advised his readers, 'I must in every roome of the house where I dwell, imagin in some decent place thereof, a throne or chaire of estate, & dedicate the same and the whole roome to some Saint'.[71] These rooms were to be used for prayer, contemplation and reading of devotional literature. They also served to focus the mind, continually directing the occupant's thoughts towards God, and ensured that their behaviour would be appropriately restrained by being reminded of the examples of the saints.[72] Southwell also suggested that Catholics could dedicate outside areas, in gardens, farmland and walks surrounding their homes to different saints or to different aspects of Christ's life, and use their journeys to these parts of their properties as pilgrimages.[73] For Southwell, the use of the domestic environment as sacred space could allow Catholics to continue to engage in the different aspects of religious worship that had been lost with the establishment of a Protestant state Church. The importance of sacred space in the home is suggested by Southwell's assertion that they were to be treated with the same reverence as a church or a chapel.[74]

Southwell's guide to living a virtuous life was written for wealthy Catholics. He assumed the ownership of a house that had more than one room, talked of how to behave in the dining room or parlour, advised on the treatment of servants and also called for decoration of rooms dedicated to saints in a manner that was 'fitte for such an inhabitant'.[75] The assumed wealth of the reader was perhaps unsurprising given that access to printed materials would have been rather limited, with only those of considerable means being able to afford such texts. Wealthy Catholics were far more

[71] Robert Southwell, *A Short Rule of good lyfe* (St. Omers, 1622), ESTC Citation no., S106293, p. 162.
[72] Ibid, pp. 164-5.
[73] Ibid, p. 165.
[74] Ibid, p. 162.
[75] Ibid, pp. 74, 95-7, 163.

able than their co-religionists in the lower orders to physically distinguish a room, or part of the room, as sacred by placing specially designed furniture and religious artwork in the space. Richly decorated domestic chapels remained a rarity throughout the early modern period.[76] However, many Catholics could perhaps have afforded to set aside a chair in a corner of the room or dedicated some part of the outside space around their property to a saint or to part of the Stations of the Cross.[77] While these humble spaces would probably not have been physically different from the rest of the dwelling, they were perhaps psychologically distinct to the user.

As well as these informally used spaces inside and outside the home, some Catholics also had access to more formal chapels. The chapels that continued to be used in the post-Reformation period could be roughly divided into two groups – the relics of the medieval Church that had survived the destruction of the Henrician and Edwardian reforms, and the newly created chapels maintained by the gentry. The chapels maintained by the aristocracy, gentry and foreign dignitaries operated both as personal chapels for their owners and, sometimes, as centres for the wider Catholic community. The maintenance of these spaces provided the household and any other Catholics allowed to use it, with a dedicated area for their religious devotions. In the wealthiest households, such chapels provided spaces in which the priests that the family protected could perform Mass and serve the religious needs of their patrons and servants.[78] However, such sacred spaces also presented considerable problems to their owners. To set aside an existing room, even an attic, or construct a new building, was expensive and prevented the space being used for any other purpose. Perhaps most importantly, a chapel had to be carefully concealed lest it reveal the family's

[76] Williams, "Forbidden Sacred Spaces", p. 97.
[77] McClain, *Lest We Be Damned*, p. 185.
[78] Williams, "Forbidden Sacred Spaces", pp. 100-101.

entertainment of priests to any magistrate who thought to raid the property. Many wealthy Catholic families instead chose to use ordinary rooms, closets and attics that had been dedicated in the fashion described by missionaries like Southwell.[79] These could double as chapels for itinerant missionary priests and as spaces for personal contemplation when priests were unavailable. When Mass was to be performed in such rooms, specially made furniture could be converted into altars, and religious art helped focus attention onto the priest and the act of consecrating the Host.[80]

Without a clear Catholic religious authority that could consecrate and sanction new religious spaces to replace those lost in the Reformation, the suitability of rooms used as venues for the performance of Mass emerged as a significant issue for the Catholic community. As it became increasingly clear that parish churches were not going to be returned to Catholic use in the foreseeable future, missionary priests and other Catholic authors proscribed against Catholic contributions to their upkeep.[81] While it was decided that the consecration of these sites was not lost through their use by Protestants, they were no longer seen as suitable places to be frequented by Catholics.[82]

In their absence, private chapels came to be some of the most important and controversial Catholic sacred spaces. Some did survive the Reformation and were particularly prized, however, few Catholics were willing to commission new chapels under the strictures of the Elizabethan government.[83] Instead, Catholic families and the priests that served them often exploited the fact that Mass did not have to be

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[79] Ibid, pp. 162-165.
[80] Williams, "Forbidden Sacred Spaces" pp. 103-105.
[81] A. Walsham, *Church Papists: Catholicism, Conformity and Confessional Polemic in Early Modern England* (Woodbridge, The Royal Historical Society Publications, 1993) pp. 63-65.
[82] Ibid, pp.96-97.
[83] Ibid, p.97.

performed on consecrated ground to allow them to utilise unsanctioned rooms within a variety of dwellings for the purpose of worship.[84]

Purpose built pre-Reformation chapels were not equally distributed across the Principality, and were not as common as in London and the south-east of England. While the Catholic gentry of some parts of Wales wielded a remarkable amount of influence and regional power, they did not always possess sufficient wealth to create the kind of ostentatiously decorated spaces maintained by members of the English Catholic elite. However, there were some examples of formal chapels that survived in the homes of wealthier Catholics beyond the years of the Reformation and continued to be used throughout the seventeenth century.

In eastern Wales, Raglan Castle had been a focal point for the Catholic community in the years leading up to the Civil War. However, the earl, later marquess, of Worcester and his son, Lord Herbert, both attracted great suspicion, with many rumours circulating during the war years that they intended to organise a Catholic insurrection.[85] The destruction of Raglan in 1646 meant that the chapels of less prominent Catholic aristocrats and gentry became more significant. Chapels were identified at the homes of Lady Jones of Treowen and the Morgans of Llantarnum.[86] The reports of these chapels were compiled by members of the Protestant elite who sought to expose the continued practice of Catholicism in various parts of the British Isles. However, despite this clear political and religious bias the information supplied by witnesses and informants to Parliament and the courts should not be discounted out of hand. Careful consideration of the various individuals consistently named in these

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[84] Ibid, p. 101.
[85] Anon., *A Discovery of a horrible and Bloody Treason And Conspiracie* (London, 1641), *passim*; Anon., *A new Plot against the Parliament. Englands Deliverance. Or a true and great Discoverie Of a horrible and bloudy Treason And Conspiracie* (London, 1641), *passim*.
[86] Sir John Trevor, *An Abstract of Several Examinations Taken upon Oath in the Counties of Monmouth and Hereford,* (London, 1680), *passim.*

reports suggests that there were key gentry households that maintained illicit chapels, both formally consecrated and concealed as ordinary rooms, in which Mass could be heard by the Catholics of eastern Wales.

The Morgans' chapel was described in some detail in 1678 by the Protestant former magistrate John Arnold.[87] Importantly, Llantarnum Abbey was a former religious house of the Cistercian order.[88] During the Dissolution, the Morgan's had acquired the property and estate, but remained loyal Catholics. As such, Llantarnum Abbey provided a clear link for seventeenth-century worshippers with the Pre-Reformation Church. The consecration of the original abbey meant that the chapel maintained by the Morgans was a rare example of an ancient sacred space that was free from Protestant "contamination". Arnold reported that the chapel was a distinct and decorated room within the property, containing 'Altar and Ornament therein for the celebration of Mass'.[89] A further witness, William James, told the committee that he had seen many Catholics come to Llantarnum to receive Mass from the priest, David Lewis, and that couples were also married in the chapel.[90]

The suggestion that the Morgans' chapel was ornamented and contained an altar for religious ceremonies is of particular interest. It would suggest that this was a space where the family felt it necessary and were confident enough to display their religious beliefs through the symbolism of decoration and furnishings. Williams has drawn attention to the way in which special furniture, religious paintings, and even embroidered or printed images of Christ and the saints were used to inspire devotional behaviour and indicate the sanctity of gentry chapels.[91] Because few chapels from the

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[87] Ibid.
[88] http://cistercian-way.newport.ac.uk/place.asp, accessed 17th June 2013.
[89] Trevor, *An Abstract of Several Examinations*, p. 12.
[90] Ibid, p. 4.
[91] Williams, "Forbidden Sacred Spaces" pp. 107-108.

pre-Reformation survived, most of the rooms used for this function did not contain the kinds of ornate decoration that were associated with traditional Catholic sacred spaces. In order to indicate the special nature of the places where Mass was performed, families put up religious images and paintings. In some of the wealthiest households, new religious paintings and plasterwork were commissioned to act as altarpieces.[92] Williams argues that the display of these objects in the rooms used for Mass imbued unconsecrated spaces with sacredness, making the appropriate for use by priests.[93]

Unfortunately, Arnold did not elaborate on the nature of the ornaments in the Morgan chapel, so it is unclear whether they were new additions to the chapel or sacred objects and furnishings of the pre-Reformation era. However, the description of ornaments suggests the Morgans utilised the same visual delineation of sacred space that has been found in the homes of wealthy families across the border in England. The description of an altar in the chapel is particularly tantalising, as the survival of the Abbey's original consecrated altar would have made this space of particular value as a venue for Mass. The Catholic Church continued to insist that Mass was performed on consecrated altars, with vestments, a missal and chalice.[94] The altar, and the other instruments of the ritual, remained crucial due to their ability to impart sacredness into the unconsecrated rooms that often were used as chapels. Unfortunately, due to the complete redesigning of Llantarnum in the nineteenth century, it is impossible to tell whether this altar was a medieval original or a new additional to sanctify this most important of sacred spaces.

The creation of fully functioning chapels in the homes of some of Monmouthshire's Catholic gentry was to prove particularly distasteful to the JPs like

[92] Ibid.
[93] Ibid, pp. 109-110.
[94] Ibid, pp.103-105.

Arnold who reported to Parliament in the 1670s and 1680s.[95] However, the very journeys of local Catholics to hear Mass at these chapels could prove equally contentious with members of their local Protestant neighbours and highlight the numerous problems caused by intersecting of ideas of sacred space. It was also reported to Parliament in 1678, that a chapel maintained at the home of Lady Jones of Treowen was not only an affront to Anglican orthodoxy because it provided alternative religious services to the population, but also because of how the congregation chose to make their way to and from Mass.[96]

Treowen, lying to the north of the village of Dingestow and west of Monmouth, was located not far from the old family seat of the earls and marquesses of Worcester. The Jones family were intermarried with or descended from the Milbornes of Clytha, Morgan's of Llantarnum and Somersets of Raglan, the most controversial Catholic families in the county. Given that she was one of the Milborne sister who all entertained missionary priests, it is perhaps unsurprising that Lady Jones was reported to maintain a chapel at her home in 1678. However, Roger Seys, who reported this to the Parliamentary committee, seems to have been most irritated by the behaviour of the chapel's congregation outside the confines of Lady Jones' home. He reported that they went to and from the chapel quite openly through the parish churchyard and during times when Anglican services were commencing.[97] Such blatant disregard for the legal strictures requiring church attendance seem to have been too much for the minister to bear.

The fact that this local controversy centred on a churchyard, has resonance with a more violent conflict that erupted on the Marches a generation earlier. In 1605, a

[95] Trevor, *An Abstract of Several Examinations*, pp. 4-9.
[96] Trevor, *An Abstract of Several Examinations*, p. 10.
[97] Ibid.

rising of local Catholics in the Monnow valley on the border with Herefordshire caused major disruption and a military response from London, after a dispute over Catholic access to a local parish graveyard.[98] The Whitsun Riots had initially erupted from a dispute over the burial of Catholic woman in a parish churchyard.[99] The fact that Catholics traversing the parish's burial ground on their way to Mass was causing consternation over 70 years later suggests that access to and the use of sacred spaces remained contentious between some Protestants and Catholics.

While distinct gentry chapels did exist in wealthy Catholic households in Wales, they were not as common as in other parts of the British Isles. It should also be remembered that their accessibility to the wider Catholic community was also subject to the discretion of the Catholic families that maintained them. For the majority of Welsh Catholics, access to priests was often only found in far less salubrious surroundings than were enjoyed by the Morgans and Joneses. The poverty and cultural differences of parts of upland Wales meant that they were far less appealing prospects to missionaries. Williams suggests that this scarcity of priests was a common feature of Catholic life in the wilder regions of the British Isles, where the faith often flourished.[100] Those few who did work amongst the Welsh Catholic community were often itinerant and, in Monmouthshire, were reported to be accommodated in relatively modest homes.[101] This absence of regular priestly attendance and the nature of the accommodation available perhaps provides some explanation for the way that some Catholic households utilised and delineated sacred

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[98] R. Matthias, *Whitsun Riots: an account of a commotion amongst Catholics in Herefordshire and Monmouthshire in 1605* (London, Bowes and Bowes, 1963) *passim.*
[99] Ibid, pp. 5, 109.
[100] Williams, "Forbidden Sacred Spaces", p. 99.
[101] J. D., *A True Narrative of that Grand Jesuite Father Andrews* (London, 1679), p. 3.

spaces for use in formal religious services. Masses were often reported to have taken place in specially modified halls and parlours.[102]

The activities of priests in the homes of these more middling Catholics also did not escape the scrutiny of the witnesses to the Parliamentary committee in 1678. They reported that priests performed Mass and lived in the homes of several Catholics in the counties in the south-eastern Marches and South Wales. Amongst them were the spinsters, Katherine and Christian Milborne. It was also alleged that priests stayed at their brother, Henry Milborne's house.[103] The presence of a priest in his home was a serious matter, as Milborne, was a JP. It was also alleged that members of the Scudamore family entertained priests in their homes and allowed Mass to be said there on Sundays and on holy days.[104] The testimonies given to the committee seem quite specific on the details of whether the venues for the performance of Mass were chapels or merely rooms in Catholic houses. In the cases of the Milbornes and the Scudamores, it would appear that they were using rooms in their homes and did not have designated chapels at their disposal.

Statements to the committee reveal that in South Wales, the sacraments were being performed even in non-domestic buildings. One witness testified that she had, on several occasions, received communion and seen couples married and babies christened by priests in an unspecified loft in the county. Interestingly, the same witness stated that these services had been so well attended that the loft had to be propped up to prevent it from collapsing under the weight of the people.[105] Even though these rooms and lofts had not been formally consecrated and bore little

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[102] Williams, "Forbidden Sacred Spaces", pp. 100-1; Trevor, *An Abstract of Several Examinations,* p. 6

[103] Trevor, *Abstract of Several Examinations*, p. 6

[104] Ibid, p. 7.

[105] Ibid, p. 6.

resemblance to a church, they clearly had an important role in providing the Catholic community with access to the sacraments. The fact that so many Catholics attended these services suggests that they were not simply used by the gentry who owned the property and their servants, but also by Catholics from the surrounding area.

It is also significant to note that priests were also reported to frequent the homes of poorer Catholics. The elderly priest, Fr. Andrews resided with a poor widow Jane Harris, described in a contemporary account. Her poverty was to such an extent that the local butcher raised the alarm with the local JP, John Arnold, after she started buying small amounts of meat on a more regular basis for the sick priest.[106] St David Lewis was arrested as he was about to leave a small cottage to say Mass at Llantarnum House.[107] It would appear that the missionary priests operating in this part of South Wales relied on poorer Catholics to provide sanctuary and accommodation, while using the homes of the gentry as venues for services. Clearly the homes of the poor would not have provided a suitably large or prestigious location for performing Mass. However, the barns and lofts of local farms were utilised as well as the ornately decorated chapels of families like the Morgans.

While the chapels, rooms and lofts where Mass was performed were important holy spaces for the Catholic community of the Marches, undoubtedly the most important sacred site in south eastern Wales was the Jesuit headquarters at the Cwm. The Cwm was reported as a centre of Catholic activities to the committee investigating Catholicism in 1678. John Arnold stated that a chapel operated on the site and that Mass was 'constantly said there'.[108] The site was eventually destroyed in 1679 after a

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[106] J. D., *Account of Father Andrews*, p. 3.
[107] St David Lewis stated that he had been arrested 'in a little House' in the parish of Llantarnum. This has been identified as a cottage adjoining the local blacksmith's. The site is now marked by a memorial to the saint. St David Lewis, *A Narrative of the Imprisonment and Tryal of Mr David Lewis* (London, 1679), p.1.
[108] Ibid, p. 20.

raid by the bishop of Hereford, Herbert Croft. Croft published an account of what he found, and who owned and administered the property.[109] The estate had originally belonged to Edward Somerset, second marquess of Worcester, who let it to a William Morton on a 99 year lease. When Morton died, the estate was inherited by Robert Hutton, a Londoner, who Croft identified as a merchant. He in turn let the Lower Cwm to William Williams.[110] Croft alleged that a Jesuit College had operated on the site since March 1652, suggesting that Morton rented the property with the intention of using it to support the South Wales mission.[111] Morton had leased the property from the second marquess, providing cover for the Somerset family in their attempts to promote Catholicism in the region. While Henry Somerset, the third marquess, converted to Protestantism in the 1650s, the family were still well connected with Catholic members of the aristocracy and gentry. His conversion was suspected by members of the Protestant gentry in Monmouthshire and Glamorgan, and he was accused of promoting and protecting Catholics and church papists.[112] It is perhaps unsurprising that links would be made between the marquesses of Worcester and the Jesuit college in the region. Croft stated that Henry Milborne's family attended Mass regularly at the Cwm, although there was no evidence that Milborne himself had attended.[113] Milborne's connection to the Cwm was further evidence of the Somersets' complicity in the operations of the mission.

Clearly, the accusations presented by members of Monmouthshire's Protestant gentry were politically expedient. Henry Somerset's conversion to Protestantism had

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[109] Herbert Croft, *A Short Narrative of the Discovery of a College of Jesuits, At a Place called the Come*, (London, 1679).
[110] Croft, *A Short Narrative of the Discovery of a College of Jesuits*, p. 2
[111] Ibid, p. 7.
[112] P. Jenkins, "Anti-popery on the Welsh Marches in the Seventeenth Century", *HJ*, 23, 2, 1980, p. 280-1.
[113] Croft, *A Short Narrative of the Discovery of a College of Jesuits*, p. 10.

meant that he could reclaim the family lands forfeited during the Interregnum and emerge as a major power in the politics of the region. This new dominance by a relatively young, former Catholic created considerable concern and resentment among members of the unusually powerful local gentry. It would, therefore, be in their interest to promote the view that Catholics were openly practising their religion and that members of the Catholic gentry were being promoted to positions of authority unfairly and illegally. However, it should not be underestimated that there were genuine religious tensions in the community. [114] The allegations that priests were operating from the Cwm with at least some knowledge and protection from the Somersets seem credible given the family's connection to the site over three generations.

From the evidence that was presented to the authorities and reported in print, it would seem that the Catholic community in east Wales was able to utilise a number of newly created or repurposed sacred spaces that replaced the churches, abbeys and shrines lost during the Reformation.[115] These spaces ranged from rooms within their own homes that were psychologically, ritually or even visually distinguished as spiritually significant, to specifically designated chapels. These environments provided venues for the performance of Mass and the taking of the sacraments, attracting large congregations from across the region.[116]

The prominence of the Catholic gentry in maintaining the chapels and the South Wales mission, would suggest that the community in this part of Wales was organised around the traditional, seigneurial bonds that identified by Bossy and

[114] P. Jenkins, "Antipopery on the Welsh Marches in the Seventeenth Century", *Historical Journal*, 23, 2, 1980, pp. 276-277. For details of Catholic demography, see chapter 2.
[115] Croft, *A Short Narrative of the Discovery of a College of Jesuits*; Trevor, *Abstract of Several Examinations*.
[116] Ibid.

others.[117] Furthermore, the incorporation of chapels within their homes meant that wealthy Catholics could ensure that their families, servants and tenants had access to a priest on a fairly regular basis. However, it could also be suggested that the numbers of individuals said to have attended these services indicate that Mass was not just being performed for gentlemen and their households, and attracted Catholics from villages and farms across the area.[118] To suggest that this community reflected a paternalistic model of Catholic survival maintained through the chapels and priestly networks of the gentry, would be to ignore the diversity of the religious culture in the region as reflected in the wide variety of sacred spaces that operated outside the control of the gentry.

As well as using newly created sacred spaces designed to replace churches, Welsh Catholics also chose to continue using shrines and holy wells that had spiritual significance dating back many centuries. Unlike parish churches, these sacred spaces could not be turned to Protestant worship, and so were not used by the Anglican Church. Some were attacked and desecrated during the Henrician and Edwardian Reformations and by Puritan iconoclasts during the Civil War, but a surprising number survived and continued to be used into the eighteenth century and beyond.

Since its arrival in the Principality, Welsh Christianity has been connected with distinct geographical features. The association of hills, mountains and springs with native saints or with biblical figures and events reflected the early church's ability to incorporate the beliefs of other cultures into its religious practices. One of these local geographical landmarks given spiritual significance was the Skirrid Mountain, also known as St Michael's Mount, in Monmouthshire. On the summit can still be found

[117] Bossy, "Character of Elizabethan Catholicism", p. 40.
[118] Trevor, *Abstract of Several Examinations*, pp. 6, 8.

the remains of a small chapel dedicated to St Michael. In 1678, John Arnold, whose property, Llanfihangel Court, was located in the same parish as the mountain, reported that he had witnessed 'a hundred papists meet on the top of an high Hill, called St Michaels Mount, where is frequent meetings eight or ten times in the year'.[119] He went on to state that he had been informed that Mass was said on the mountain and that sermons had also been preached on occasion.[120] John Scudamore of Kentchurch in Herefordshire further elaborated these reports by describing the remains of the chapel and altar. He stated that the altar comprised of 'a Stone with crosses on it', and that he had seen people with rosaries kneeling towards this stone.[121] Evidently the ruined chapel continued to fulfil its original function as a place of worship for the Catholic community. The preaching that occurred on the summit also seems to have been of a high quality, with a number of Catholics having told Scudamore that 'they have heard as good Sermons preached as ever they heard in their Lives' during services at the ruined chapel.[122]

The Skirrid is a particularly interesting example of Catholic sacred space because it combines two different conceptions of sanctity. The ruined chapel and altar on the summit of the mountain are a sacred space in the same fashion as any conventional church, or the chapels found in gentry households and at the Cwm. St Michael's Chapel is a formerly consecrated space. The Catholic belief in transubstantiation meant that the performance of Mass in a chapel or church sanctified the space through the perceived presence of God.[123] The same hierophany also applies to St Michael's Chapel.

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[119] Trevor, *Abstract of Several Examinations*, p. 14.
[120] Ibid,
[121] Ibid.
[122] Ibid, pp. 14-15.
[123] Williams, "Forbidden Sacred Spaces", p. 103-5.

However, as well as the obvious significance of the consecrated chapel on the summit, it is important to consider the more subtle and perhaps more abstract conception of sacred space, which is manifest by the Skirrid Mountain itself. The mountain is a striking local landmark whose mysterious shape lends it a certain presence even in the modern day.[124] Now located just outside the suburbs of Abergavenny, the Skirrid marked an important pass through the foothills of the Brecon Beacons, with the Skirrid Mountain Inn on the road leading to the mountain being an important rest stop for travellers come to and from Breconshire. The mountain was referred to by a number of names most commonly as St Michael's Mount or the Holy Mountain. For many centuries the mountain's unusual shape was thought to result from the splitting of the mountain during a violent storm at the exact moment of Christ's death.[125]. However, this was in fact the result of a prehistoric landslide. Importantly, the region around the mountain also contains several other prominent local landmarks that were also thought to have supernatural origins. A large, toadstool-shaped stone on the Skirrid is known as the Devil's Table, which, according to legend, was set up by the Devil to have tea with a local giant known as Jack o' Kent. Clearly, the unusual geology of this area led the local population to attribute such formations to the interference in the physical world of the two most powerful beings they could imagine, God and Satan.

The legendary origins of the mountain explain why it was regarded as sacred space. The splitting of the Skirrid at the moment of Christ's death is a hierophany, as it distinguishes the sacred from the profane.[126] However, the construction of a chapel on the summit of the mountain and the continued use of this space by Catholics after

[124] See photographic plate 12.
[125] Jenkins, "Anti-popery on the Welsh Marches", p. 278.
[126] Eliade, *Sacred and Profane*, pp. 27-8.

the Reformation enhanced and complicated its status as a holy place. The consecration of the ground on which the chapel stands means that the mountain's sacredness is no longer simply tied to the apocryphal story of its origins. Instead it is made sacred through a ritual act.

This kind of ritualised behaviour is a crucial part of the delineation of sacred space, not just because it is demanded in the doctrines of the Church, but because it contributes towards the development of distinct areas that belong to the community. Mazumdar and Mazumdar suggest that 'prescribed sacred acts involving sacred symbols not only promote the emergence of a religious identity, they also play an important role in linking people to places'.[127] The appropriation of churches for Protestant worship and the destruction of monasteries and shrines during the Reformation forced Catholic communities across the British Isles to re-imagine sacred space. Those few medieval shrines that survived the efforts of the reformers provided Catholics with an important link to the past and a powerful means of shaping their religious identity. Ancient chapels, even ruined ones like St Michael's on the Skirrid, were important aids to the delineation of a Catholic space from its Protestant surroundings.

A similar process can be found at work in the continued use of holy wells across Wales. The perception of springs as sacred spaces seems to be confined to specific localities in the British Isles. Only Wales and Ireland have holy wells in any profusion. However, in both these countries, the wells came to be an important part of native spirituality. Holy wells were found across Wales and ranged in significance from simple springs from which water could be collected, to major shrines that attracted pilgrims from across the region. The wells themselves were regarded as sacred

[127] Mazumdar and Mazumdar, "Sacred Space and Place Attachment", p. 238.

because of their association with particular saints. Much of the mythology surrounding the formation of these wells have been lost, but some have survived and provide information about how these places came to be afforded such spiritual significance.

Perhaps the most famous story associated with a Welsh well is that of St Winifred's Well in North Wales. Holywell came to be regarded as one of the major pilgrimage shrines in Britain, and is the only site in Britain that has maintained a constant pilgrimage tradition from the establishment of the Celtic Church to the present day. In 1130, Robert, Prior of Shrewsbury, where St Winifred's relics had been moved, published the first written account of the saint's life.[128] This was in turn used as the basis for the publication of another account produced by the Jesuit, John Falconer in 1635.[129] The two accounts are largely the same in their detail of how the saint lived and died. However, Falconer's account also included descriptions of miracles that supposedly occurred at the well.[130]

Legend has it that the well was created when Winifred was chased and beheaded by the local prince, Caradoc, after she spurned his advances. Where Winifred's head fell to the ground, water gushed forth and her blood stained the stones. Her parents and other members of the community were attending the nearby church, where her uncle, St Beuno was leading the service. Having heard the commotion, the congregation rushed outside to be confronted by Winifred's lifeless corpse and the prince wiping the blood from his sword. Beuno promptly picked up the severed head, placed it back on his niece's neck and prayed that she may be restored. In honour of her sacrifice to maintain her chastity, God miraculously returned the girl to life, leaving her with only a thin white scar encircling her neck. Caradoc was variously said to have

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[128] Robert, Prior of Shrewsbury, *The Life of St Winifred*, 1130, in R. S. Miola (ed.), *Early Modern Catholicism: An Anthology of Primary Sources* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2007) pp. 283-5.
[129] Falconer, *The Admirable Life of S. Wenefride.*
[130] Ibid.

been swallowed up by the ground or carried away by devils. Winifred went on to become an abbess of note, renowned for her piety, while her well and relics were said to heal people of numerous diseases.[131]

In a rather different and perhaps even more dramatic story, the sacred spring at Penrhys in the Rhondda was said to have developed its healing powers from a divine wooden statue of the Virgin and Child that had fallen from Heaven into one of the oak trees growing near to the well. Despite being removed to the nearby abbey, the statue always miraculously returned to the well. As a result of this appearance, the water of the well began to cure the sick, the blind and the deaf, and was even said to have raised the dead.[132]

It would appear that, like the Skirrid Mountain, some of the Welsh holy wells were regarded as sacred as a result of both the spiritual significance of the physical location and through the ritual consecration performed by the clergy. As formally consecrated ground, the chapels built on these sites provided venues for the celebration of Mass and the reception of the sacraments, sanctified by the perceived presence of God. However, the miraculous events in saints' lives or apparent divine intervention that had occurred there, were also believed to have marked these places as particularly special, and imparted to the people a mechanism for protecting themselves from the worst calamities of early modern life. The subsequent construction of chapels and churches enhanced the perception of their sanctity. These spaces are not just sacred because they were identified as such formally by the Church, but also because of their history as sites where God's divine power had been manifest.

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[131] Ibid.
[132] John and Rees, *Pilgrimage*, p. 114.

It has been widely documented that a variety of rituals were practised at these shrines, all intended to procure the intercession of the patron saint to assist the devotee. Common themes can be seen in these ritual acts and they should be seen as part of the wider Catholic tradition of venerating saints. Offerings were generally left at wells, while prayers made either at the well-side or at nearby chapels and churches for intercession to cure illness, end barrenness or to gain assistance in times of misfortune. These offerings ranged from sea-shells, to rags tied in nearby trees, to flowers and candles left on altars and in the wells themselves.[133] These offerings are essentially similar to the kinds of offerings left at the shrines of saints across the Catholic world and seem to have functioned in the same fashion.[134] They provided believers with a tangible gift to leave for their chosen saint and a means of influencing and gaining divine intervention in their favour. Such traditional offerings are still left at these shrines today.[135] Evidence of the continuation of this practice provides historians with some insight into which traditions were preserved beyond the Reformation. The choice of objects left as offerings often had deeper symbolic meanings for pilgrims. Rags were traditionally left at pilgrimage shrines and were often torn from the pilgrims own clothing. Some were bloodied and represented the physical suffering of the pilgrim, while others were thought to physically unburden the pilgrim of their disease. The practice was once widespread across Catholic Europe, but is now discouraged at many pilgrimage sites.[136] Other offerings were symbolic of the act of pilgrimage itself. Shells had been used as drinking vessels during pilgrimage, and evolved into a

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[133] Jones, *Holy Wells*, p. 92-6.
[134] M. L. and S Norton, *Christian Pilgrimage in Modern Western Europe* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1989) pp. 68-71.
[135] Offerings left at shrines dedicated to SS Peter and John and St Anthony can be seen in photographic plate 14.
[136] The tradition of leaving rags as offerings is also found in the Islamic world and can be found at the shrines of those honoured within the Muslim tradition, such as at Meryemana on Mt. Koressos in Turkey.

traditional symbol of pilgrimage. Additionally, it was also left as an offering at the shrines that pilgrims journeyed to, particularly the major shrine to St James at Santiago de Compostela. They were also used by Welsh pilgrims and are still left at one shrine to the present day.[137]

The offerings left at these shrines are also important in that they also provide information regarding on how ritualised behaviour can be interpreted through the geographical context in which it takes place. The choice of certain offerings at shrines can, in some cases be seen as not simple reflecting the traditional symbolism of pilgrimage, but were also convenient to their environments. Consideration of the geographical locations of the shrines and wells that were still in use in the late 1600s provides additional insight into why some of the Catholic communities' sacred spaces continued to be used beyond the medieval period while others fell into disuse. In order to do this effectively, it is necessary for historians to visit the locations of these shrines in the present to understand their physical surroundings. The use of evidence of extant practices to understand the past can seem controversial and limited in its applicability. However, careful observation of where these shrines are located, taking account of the changes that have been wrought in Wales' physical landscape in the intervening 330 years, is a valid means of understanding how and why these spaces were used. It also provides historians with the opportunity to consider the geographical evidence of these places in conjunction with that left in the archival and printed records.

It could be argued that an important factor in the survival of some of the oldest Catholic shrines was the fact that they were located in relatively quiet, out of the way locations. Two clear examples of this can be found in West Wales. In the seventeenth century Glamorgan, Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire were not famed for their

[137] See photographic plates 27 and 28 for details of shell offerings left at St Anthony's Well.

Catholic populations. However, it would seem that there were Catholics living in the regions and missionary priests did occasionally visit.[138] Interestingly, both counties contain evidence of Catholics using holy wells and of families preserving an important relic that reappeared in the public domain in the nineteenth century after years of private use and adoration.[139]

This region of Wales also contains two examples of holy wells, still used by Catholics, which suggest the degree to which physical location may have played a role in shaping the practices of Catholics that used these special sites. The wells of SS Peter and John in Bishopston near Swansea are located in a small clearing that is not easily accessible today.[140] Importantly, it is located outside the town in a quiet and isolated area of woodland. A small ruined chapel stands adjacent to the wells, into which local Catholic still place flowers and visit to pray, particularly for the missing.[141] While the area around the wells was probably more open when the medieval chapel was constructed, the surrounding woodland has enclosed the area, with only modern allotments offering clear, open space next to the well and chapel area. The physical isolation of this spot, outside the local population centre and accessed only via a steep path down into the clearing and valley, is suggestive that this small shrine has survived the ravages of successive religious transformations in Wales because of its relative remoteness. It is not easily stumbled upon and can be visited discreetly if needed.

A similar level of discretion is offered for those pilgrims visiting a second west Wales shrine located in the small Carmarthenshire town of Llansteffan.[142] The holy

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[138] NLW Penrice and Margam Muniments 2, MS L151

[139] One of these was the skull of St Teilo, which was used at Llandeilo Llwydiarth, know housed in a reliquary in Llandaff Cathedral; Jones, *Holy Wells*, p. 116; Jones and Rees, *Pilgrimage*, pp. 74-5.

[140] An OS showing the chapels can be found here - http://www.ancientmonuments.info/wa2279-st-peter-s-chapel-well-caswell-bay/osmaphttp://www.ancientmonuments.info/wa2279-st-peter-s-chapel-well-caswell-bay/osmap

[141] See photographic plate 17.

[142] See photographic plates 23 and 24.

well of St Anthony is located in a small valley running from the western edge of the town down to the beach.[143] This quiet spot can be accessed most easily by walking along the beach from the town and then up the valley.[144] Again the relative isolation of this spot suggests that Catholics could continue to use it for worship without the likelihood of exposure. Furthermore, Llansteffan was the departure point for the ferries to Langharne and Kidwelly. The regular need to journey to local markets in such a rural community, might also point to an explanation of why this shrine seems to have survived for so long. The presence of pilgrims visiting the shrine would have been unlikely to raise the same level of suspicion as in other areas due to the increased numbers of people moving through the village to travel to other towns in the region. Interestingly, traditional shell offerings that symbolised pilgrimage and continue to be used at the shrine would have been extremely easy to collect as pilgrims walked along the beach to the shrine.[145] In a similar fashion, the chapel at the Skirrid may also have initially attracted Catholics to use it because of its relatively remote position in the foothills of the Brecon Beacons, while still being accessible from the Catholic centre at Abergavenny.

Consideration of the geographical location and physical surroundings of these shrines suggests that their use by Catholics beyond the years of the Reformation were not simply random. The opportunities to conceal Catholic worship or at least limit its exposure to prying eyes, were greater at these sites than at those located in more open areas and major towns. Also, in some cases, the very natural environment could act to inspire the ritualised behaviour that was exhibited there.

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[143] See photographic plates 23 and 30.
[144] An OS map showing the location of the well can be found here - http://www.megalithic.co.uk/article.php?sid=22150
[145] See photographic plate 27 for evidence of this continuing tradition at the well.

As well as leaving offerings and praying to the saint at remote and quiet holy wells and ruined chapels, some pilgrims to the holy wells participated in much more strenuous acts of worship, even at high profile religious centres. Clearly, not all Welsh Catholics of the later seventeenth century felt that their religious activities should be subtly concealed. Bathing in or drinking the well water were common ways that believers sort to partake of the divine benefits of these sacred places. At some wells these rituals were fairly straightforward affairs. However, at one of the country's most prominent Catholic shrines a more demanding ritual was necessary for those pilgrims seeking to be healed. At St Winifred's Well, pilgrims had to brave the freezing waters of the bathing pool a number of times, praying for the saint's intercession and repenting of their sins before a cure would be given.[146]

Despite the physical hardship necessary to procure divine assistance, Holywell seems to have had one of the most enduring pilgrimage cultures in Wales. This did not go unnoticed by Protestant leaders after the Reformation. In November 1629, it was recorded that a number of eminent Catholics had visited the shrine, including the Earl of Shrewsbury, Lord William Howard and Lady Falkland. It was said that the total number of 'knights, ladies and gentleman' who were seen at the well was 1,400, along with 150 priests.[147] However, despite the unwanted attention that could be attracted to the well, priests continued to publicise the apparently miraculous cures of Catholics. In 1674, a young man from Cardigan, who suffered from a malignant disease of the leg joints, visited the shrine along with friends. Being too poor to afford to pay for the journey to the shrine, they moved from house to house until they reached the well, surviving on the charity of others. When he arrived he was helped into the

[146] Ibid, p. 102
[147] Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, *Charles I, 1629-1631*, CLI, 13, p. 87, 3rd Nov., 1629.

water and was immediately able to stand and walk with support. Within a few days all symptoms of the disease had disappeared and his recovery was hailed as the result of the saint's miraculous intervention.[148]

Unsurprisingly, smaller, less significant wells did not receive the same attention as major shrines like Holywell, but their importance to local communities does seem to have been marked. While cures were not publicised in any way by the Church, the crutches of the healed were left to testify to the curative power of Divine intervention. Such testaments of faith were left at the side of the well of Ffynnon Gybi on Anglesey until the early part of the eighteenth century. Similarly, items were left on the chapel altar at St Govan's in Pembrokeshire, and were still to be found in an adjoining cottage at Ffynnon Sara in Derwen when it burnt down in 1860.[149] Evidently, even small wells noted for their ability to cure through the intercession of saints, were an important source of treatment and solace to local communities in times of strife and affliction.

However, it is important to acknowledge that many of these holy wells were also used by Protestants and those simply seeking relief from illness. In her study of Holywell, Walsham outlines how the well came to be used by Protestants with no belief in the power of the saint, but who thought that the waters had special medicinal properties or simply provided great refreshment after a long journey.[150] She argues that the use of the well by Protestants was not evidence of their adherence to Catholic practices, but indicated their belief in a different explanation of the origins of the curative powers of the waters.[151] Given the evidence that Protestants resorted to a major Catholic shrine like St Winifred's Well on a regular basis, it does not seem

[148] John and Rees, *Pilgrimage*, p. 110.
[149] Jones, *Holy Wells*, pp. 101, 142, 177.
[150] Walsham, "Holywell", pp. 232-4.
[151] Ibid, p. 234.

unreasonable to assume that the smaller local wells scattered across the countryside were also used by Protestants as well as Catholics.

The coexistence of these two opposing uses of the wells for religious and secular reasons raises interesting questions about the nature of the wells as sacred spaces. Other forms of Catholic sacred space function in a rather more straightforward manner. Neither gentry chapels, nor the shrines found at places like the Skirrid were used by Protestants; they were strictly the domain of Catholics and seem to have been seen as a threat to the authority of the Protestant Church and state. While there were sporadic attempts by local magistrates and by the Crown to suppress the pilgrimages and worship taking place at St Winifred's Well, there also seems to have been a remarkable amount of tolerance shown.[152] Priests operated in a relatively open fashion in Holywell under the protection of the local gentry and aristocracy, while smaller wells attracted little comment from members of the local Protestant hierarchy.[153] This lack of concern over less conspicuous holy wells may have reflected the fact that they were used by relatively few people and were important only to small communities of Catholics living in the area. As a result, they were not of as much concern as chapels in gentry households and in towns that attracted Catholics from all over the region. However, the fact that Protestants were recorded as using wells as overtly Catholic as St Winifred's Well suggests that these places were not simply being ignored by the Protestant authorities.

The joint use of sacred space by Protestant and Catholic communities could be seen as creating a confusing mix of traditions at these sites. In his study of culture and community, Redfield points out that while one anthropologist may strive to portray a

[152] Ibid, p. 225-31; John and Rees, *Pilgrimage*, p. 110.
[153] Seguin, "Cures and Controversies",

society as cohesive and united by common rituals and beliefs, another may find one that is suffering from strife and discord, depending on his or her viewpoint.[154] Redfield takes this argument further and asserts that by considering all the different, heterogeneous understandings of a place, an action, or a belief the scholar can begin to build a complex and sophisticated understanding of the society as a whole.[155]

There is a clear need to develop such a multifaceted approach in the study of sacred space in Wales. The holy wells provide a very important insight into the nature of the relationships between individuals, communities and the physical landscape. Walsham's observation that Holywell was a site used by both committed Catholics and Protestants, suggests that it was a place where multiple meanings, understandings and beliefs about the well's power and importance could co-exist, even if they contradicted one another. While the priests ministering to pilgrims at the well may have publicised cases of misfortune that befell Protestants as punishment for their mockery of the saint or disrespect, their presence at the well did not detract from its sanctity.[156] In fact, it could be argued that they provided opportunities for the priests to enhance the shrines reputation for miracles. Equally, the use of the well by Catholic pilgrims does not seem to have prevented Protestants from using the waters for their own secular needs. Again the presence of Catholics and their belief in the saintly origins of the water's healing powers seems to have only confirmed the Protestant view that the Catholic faith was one based on superstitious beliefs and ignorance.[157]

The wells seem to have provided an environment where layers of meaning and understanding could be constructed so that the well and its apparent ability to heal,

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[154] R. Redfield, *The Little Community: Viewpoints for the Study of a Human Whole*, (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1955), pp. 132-4.
[155] Ibid, p. 139.
[156] Walsham, "Holywell", pp. 225-9.
[157] Ibid.

could be seen as significant for different reasons to different people. It is a relationship between the wells and the people who visit them that has continued to this day. The holy wells of Wales continue to attract Catholic pilgrims who leave offerings and pray to the saints in the same way as has been done for hundreds of years, but they also have significance for practitioners of Wiccan and other forms of spiritualism.[158] Clearly these peaceful places inspire many different ideas about their importance and explanations of their serenity.

The idea that the holy wells were ambiguous sacred spaces with multiple meanings and purposes raises interesting questions about the nature of Welsh Catholic sacred space generally in this period. While the doctrinal position that supported these chapels and shrines was Catholic in nature, the question remains as to whether it can be assumed all the individuals that used them ascribed the same meaning to these spaces? The literature has tended to consider the way in which the Catholic community collectively turned spaces into places where they could worship after they had been excluded from parish churches, monasteries and shrines. Much of this discussion has focused on the ways in which missionary priests, as representatives of the Church, utilised these spaces to bolster Catholicism in the British Isles. There is clear evidence of this at sites like Holywell, and even at the Skirrid. The indulgence issued by the Papacy in 1676, was a clear example of how the Church utilised these sites to shape belief even in the absence of an institutional Church.[159] However, the descriptions of how these spaces are used by Catholics, speak of their importance at an individual level. The chapels were used not just for the performance of Mass and for collective worship, but also for rites of passage that marked the most emotionally

[158] For evidence of this at Arthur's Seat, SS Peter and John's Wells and St Anthony's Well, see photographic plates 13, 14, 15, 18, 26, 27 and 28.
[159] M. R. Lewis, "The Pilgrimage to St Michael's Mount", pp. 51-4.

significant moments in an individual's life. In their reports, made to the committee investigating Catholicism in Monmouthshire in 1678, members of the Protestant gentry stated that Catholic chapels were used for the performance of christenings, marriages and funerals.[160] While these are three of the sacraments required by the Church, they are also psychologically and emotionally significant rituals that mark the major transitions in an individual's life and death.

The stories of miraculous healing reported at St Winifred's Well also suggest the deeply personal, individual struggles that led pilgrims to visit the shrines and the importance of these places in providing solace. In one particularly moving case, the priests based at the shrine recorded the case of Dorothy Harcourt, who visited with her husband and eight priests in 1622 to seek a cure for her infertility. Nine months later, she gave birth to a son. However, the child died within a year. The Jesuit commentator states that this death was the result of God's judgement that the couple were excessively fond of the child and had forgotten the instruction that nothing was to be adored more than God. The mother was again infertile and unable to produce another child for a number of years. Again, Dorothy made the journey to Holywell, and this time was blessed with a daughter. This child survived and eventually became a Carmelite nun at Antwerp.[161] This story was clearly a source of propaganda for the priest who recorded it, but also recounts one family's tragedy and the role of St Winifred's shrine in Dorothy Harcourt's attempts to deal with her infertility. Her story mirrors, to some extent, the pilgrimage of James II and his second wife, Mary of Modena to the shrine in August 1686 to pray for the birth of a son.[162] The couple had produced no surviving children for 15 years and a Catholic heir was greatly desired by

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[160] Trevor, *Abstract of Several Examinations*, pp. 4, 9.
[161] C. de Smedt (ed.), "Documenta de S. Wenefrida", *Analecta Bollandiana*, 6, 1887, p. 324, cited in Seguin, "Cures and Controversies", p. 6.
[162] Walsham, "Holywell", p. 230.

the prospective parents. While James and Mary's motivation may have resulted from dynastic concerns, it should not be forgotten that a number of the couple's children had died in infancy or had been stillborn. While the ability to produce an heir was an essential part of a queen's role, the failure of any married woman in early modern society to conceive and raise children to maturity was a personal disaster and perceived as a comment on her status as a woman.[163] Both these events suggest the degree to which holy wells were often the last resort of individuals desperately seeking some kind of help in their time of need. It would appear that these sacred spaces provided a veneer of control over the most unpredictable and devastating misfortunes that they were likely to suffer.

This resort to sacred spaces at times of great emotional, physical and psychological need, and their association with the marking of important rites of passage, can perhaps provide some insight into why individuals were willing to make the arduous journeys necessary to reach these holy places. These journeys continued to be made even during times, and in areas, that were troubled by anti-popery and active persecution of Catholics and their priests. It is this personal, individual attachment to these places that has not been adequately explained by historians. If these sites were simply places where religious traditions or rituals could be observed, then why were members of the Catholic community willing to risk such personal danger in order to visit them? Eliade's view that particular places emerge as sacred because of their juxtaposition with the profane, their proximity to the divine, and because of their association with a sacred figure or event, explains the envisioning of a space as sacred by a community.[164] It also explains how places can be regarded as

[163] Seguin, "Cures and Controversies", p. 6; S. H. Mendelson and P. M. Crawford, *Women in Early Modern England, 1550-1720* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1998) p. 150.
[164] Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, pp.20, 24.

sacred from one generation to the next. However, it does not account for the bond constructed between an individual and the sacred places he or she uses in their personal worship.

The different sacred spaces used by Wales' Catholic population served not only to provide venues for the performance of Mass, but also for the marking of the most significant events in an individual's life. Mazumdar and Mazumdar have investigated the relationship between individual emotional experience and the personal bond with a physical location. [165] They have suggested that there are a number of different kinds of place attachments associated with sacred space, reflecting the different landscapes that the sacred space can be located in (natural vs. man-made), or the different scale of the sacred space (countries, cities, mountains or rooms in a house).[166] They also suggest that whether the attachment to the sacred space is manifested at a collective, individual or familial level has a qualitative effect on the relationship with, and perception of, the sacred space. Whereas a community often labels a pre-existing space as sacred, an individual or family actively creates their sacred spaces through their religious activities in that venue. [167]

The place attachment found amongst the early modern Welsh Catholic community also demonstrates this qualitative difference. It is perhaps most visible in comparisons between the process of consecration promoted in the work of Robert Southwell in order to create a place of religious tranquillity within the Catholic home, and the collective belief in the sacredness of much older shrines like St Michael's Chapel on the Skirrid or the holy wells.[168] However, even in sites like the holy wells

[165] H. M. Proshansky, A. K. Fabian and R. Kaminoff, "Place Identity: Physical World Socialisation of the Self", *JEP*, 3, 1983, pp. 57-83, cited in Mazumdar and Mazumdar, "Religion and Place Attachment", p. 386.
[166] Mazumdar and Mazumdar, "Sacred Space and Place Attachment", p. 234.
[167] Ibid.
[168] Southwell, *A Short Rule of Good Life*, p. 162.

and chapels that have a collective dimension to their sacredness, individual place attachment also seems to have contributed to their continued use and importance, even when visiting them involved personal endangerment.

According to Mazumdar and Mazumdar 'it is in sacred space that the religious self is nurtured and religious identity expressed and developed'.[169] It could be argued, therefore, that the maintenance and use of sacred spaces by members of Wales' Catholic community contributed towards and helped maintain their religious identity at a time when it was being fundamentally challenged. The holy wells and chapels provided Catholics with a means of coming together as a community in worship and also supplied them with a means of accessing and communing with God during times of crisis. By considering the nature of sacred space from the perspectives of both the Catholic community as a whole, and the individuals who used these shrines and chapels, the true complexity and importance of sacred space in early modern Wales emerges. These were not simply places where traditional rituals could be acted out, but an integral part of religious life and a useful means of coping with the vagaries of early modern life.

Sacred space is a concept that presents the historian with considerable problems. Historians attempting to unravel the complex relationship between place and religion must take account of the function of sacred space at both a societal and an individual level. They are also faced with the problem that source material dealing with this area of religious life is often scant and unwritten. Instead the architecture, location and physical rituals observed at these sites have to be considered, in order to gain a true impression of the significance of these holy places. It is perhaps because of the abstract

[169] Idem, "Sacred Space and Place Attachment", p. 231.

nature of sacred space that it has received such little attention from historians of Welsh religion. Unlike the spread of Protestantism, which relied so heavily on literacy and the Word of God, early modern Catholicism was by its very nature more inclined to ritual expression of internal faith, and, out of necessity, was concealed from prying eyes. However, by seeking to examine the psychological and emotional meaning of these rituals, the importance of these holy places in the religious life of Catholics in the late seventeenth century need not remain hidden.

This chapter has endeavoured to highlight the many different ways in which sacred spaces were important to the people who used them. The ambiguity of sanctity as a concept means that shrines, wells and chapels can be regarded as sacred for as many reasons as there are people who use them. This layering of traditions is something that continues to occur today at the holy wells of Wales. While they are still used by Catholics in their veneration of saints and their requests for divine assistance, these places have taken on new importance to members of newly emerging spiritual groups, who find new meanings in the tranquillity and calmness of these special places. The mixing of different confessional groups at these sites in the early modern period has raised questions as to their meaning and significance within Catholicism. However, it is more accurate to recognise the essentially heterogeneous nature of all societies, and develop of a multi-faceted understanding of early modern culture. The sacred spaces of the Welsh Catholic community demonstrate the usefulness of this principle. The diversity of rituals that were practiced at these sacred spaces should not be interpreted as contradictory to Catholics commitment to the doctrine of their Church. Instead they challenge a narrow definition of Catholic worship that has too often led to the neglect of the more popular elements of Catholic culture in Wales.

Chapter Four
The Contested Social and Political Identity of Welsh Catholics

The concept of community amongst Catholics in late seventeenth century not only informed their religious practices and even their familial relationships, but also formed the basis of their identity as a distinct religious group. This identity emphasised the shared culture and social bonds that acted to hold this often disparate group together. The behaviour of Catholics living in different parts of Wales draw the historian's attention to the social and cultural differences that acted both to unify and divide the community. While some Catholics protected their servants and dependents, as well as their social equals, others found it impossible to surmount the differences in religious values that existed between supporters of the various orders operating in the region. The variance that can be seen in the nature of the Catholic communities in Wales raises a number of important questions about how any kind of unity could be achieved by such a socially heterogeneous group. Questions about the relationships created by Catholics with each other, their Anglican and Dissenting neighbours, and the state have a clear bearing on our understanding of how such communities were affected by social and political change.[1]

The fundamental link between identity and community has been highlighted by social and cultural historians and social scientists.[2] It has been suggested that social identity plays a vital role in the formation of individual self-concept, for example in

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[1] A. Walsham, *Church Papists: Catholicism, Conformity and Confessional Polemic in Early Modern England*, (Woodbridge, Boydell Press, 1993), *passim*; M. B. Rowlands (ed.), *English Catholics of Parish and Town, 1558-1778*, (London, Catholic Record Society, 1999) p. 3; A. Walsham, *Charitable Hatred: Tolerance and intolerance in England, 1500-1700*, (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2006) *passim*; W. Sheils, "'Getting on' and 'getting along' in parish and town: Catholics and their neighbours in England" in B. Kaplan, B. Moore, H. Van Nierop and J. Pollmann (eds), *Catholic Communities in Protestant States: Britain and the Netherlands c.1570-1720*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2009), pp. 67-83

[2] H. Tajfel and J. C. Turner, "The social identity theory of intergroup behaviour", in W. G. Austin and S. Worchel, *Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, (Chicago, Nelson-Hall Publishers, 1986); L. McClain, *Lest We Be Damned: Practical Innovation and Lived Experience among Catholics in Protestant England, 1559-1642*, (London, Routledge, 2004) p. 242.

defining the individual's position within systems of social hierarchy. It has also been seen as influencing the emergence of social networks and communities. The degree to which ideas of sameness and difference colour and influence the individual's evaluation and understanding of the social would around them is marked. Historians have even drawn attention to the importance of identity in influencing academic perspective, forming a prism through which the historian interprets his or her subjects, while also presenting an intriguing and problematic historical subject.[3]

In the case of Catholics living in early modern England and Wales, the construction of a positive identity was of great importance given the swings between persecution and more peaceful co-existence that occurred throughout the seventeenth century. Seventeenth-century Catholics faced the daunting realisation that their beliefs no longer reflected the unacknowledged convictions of the majority, but had become the preserve of a small, sometimes isolated community of followers. Similarly, Catholics were also faced with the continued influence and power of anti-popish prejudice within dominant Anglican culture. The depiction of Catholics as fundamentally unreliable in their support of the Anglican monarchy and gullible and superstitious in their beliefs, presented an entirely negative view of this minority group.[4] While, English and Welsh society in this period was far from universally prejudiced in its treatment of Catholics, the predominance of anti-popery and its use as a justification for discrimination affected the lives of all Catholics. However, as in all societies where prejudice is institutionalised, the attitudes of individuals to the Catholic neighbours could vary from region to region and over time. In the decades

[3] L. D. Wurgaft, "Identity in World History: A Postmodern Perspective" *HT*, 34, 2, 1995, pp. 67-68, 77-84; J. Rüsen, "How to overcome ethnocentrism: Approaches to a culture of recognition by history in the twenty-first century", *HT*, 43, 4, 2004, pp. 118-20.
[4] [Andrew Marvell], *An Account of the Growth of Popery, and Arbitrary Government* (Amsterdam, 1678) pp. 4, 5-7; C. Z. Wiener, "The beleaguered isle. A study of Elizabethan and early Jacobean anti-Catholicism", *PP*, 51, 1971, pp. 31-34, 37.

following the Restoration, Catholics did encounter significant leniency as well as outright persecution, and enjoyed a brief period of official promotion within the political and military elite under James II. Clearly, this stuttering progress through the political and social changes of restoration and revolution also effected the development of a post-Reformation Catholic identity in the British Isles.

The growth of print media and the increasing importance of public discussion of politics, economic development and religion clearly also played a role in the story of Catholicism in this period. Habermas depicted the bourgeois public sphere as a development of the Enlightenment, but increasingly historians have located its development within the political and social upheavals of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England.[5] Lake and Pincus suggest that there was 'a post-Reformation public sphere and mode of political manoeuvre and public politics' that was in evidence from the 1530s.[6] The events of the Civil Wars and the need for both Royalist and Parliamentary sides to generate funds to support their armies, provided a further boost to the culture of printed and manuscript newsletters, broadsides and pamphlet. Even after the return of the monarchy, both those at the political centre and those outside it, continued their efforts to shape policy and influence opinion through literary and visual materials, the pulpit, and in the emerging social institution of the coffeehouse.[7] The fragmentation of religious identity of this era, as well as the divisions created through political and dynastic rivalry, meant that this politics was aimed at shaping the opinions of distinct publics.[8] The evolution of the idea that a variety of different and often competing groups made up numerous, decentred public spheres has been a crucial

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[5] J. Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge, Mass., MIT Press, 1989) pp. 52-56.
[6] P. Lake and S. Pincus, "Rethinking the Public Sphere in Early Modern England", *JBS*, 45, 2, 2006, p. 273.
[7] Ibid, pp. 276-7, 289.
[8] Ibid, pp. 270, 273-4.

development in historians' application and critique of Habermas' theory. By broadening the definition of who participated in the emerging public, political and intellectual culture of early modern Europe, historians have drawn attention to the way that social conflict was played out in salons, coffeehouse, newspapers and clubs. This concept of multiple public arenas in which different social groups competed to establish the dominance of their own political symbolism is particularly important when considering the identities of religious minorities, those outside the mainstream community and the state.[9]

It might appear at first glance that a community like that of the Catholics of Wales, living far from urban centres and largely illiterately, would have found it difficult, if not impossible, to influence and be influenced by such social changes. However, such a view would overestimate the social conservatism of the Catholic elite, and the degree to which non-literate communication remained a powerful and controversial means by which Catholics could express their own distinct identity. Through sermons, the ritual of the Mass, at the gallows and even in their exploitation of the geography of the land, Catholics were quite capable of making their voices heard in an increasingly noisy social world.[10]

This chapter will examine the key questions of what Welsh Catholic identity was in this period and how it reflected the wider political and social changes that were occurring across the country. It will seek to challenge the traditional view of Welsh Catholics as an isolated group that was stagnating and then declining in the late seventeenth century. Instead, I would suggest that the community's involvement in

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[9] H. Mah, "Phantasies of the Public Sphere: Rethinking the Habermas of Historians", *JMH*, 72, 1, 2000, pp. 155, 156-8.

[10] A. Dillon, *The Construction of Martyrdom in the English Catholic Community, 1535-1603* (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2002) pp. 72-74, 78. S. Covington, *The Trail of Martyrdom: Persecution and Resistance in Sixteenth-Century England*, (Notre Dame, Ind., University of Notre Dame Press, 2003) pp. 156, 157, 174-175; McClain, *Lest We Be Damned*, p. 30.

significant regional political and economic conflicts indicates the diversity of Catholic identity and interests across Wales. This chapter will contextualise the formation of Welsh Catholic identity within the wider changes occurring across the British Isles, and reflect on how some Catholic writers explicitly sought to define Catholicism as a religion compatible with loyalty to the English crown. This chapter will examine the effect of institutionalised anti-popery upon the formation of Catholic identity and the role it played in the sectarian factionalism that dominated the politics of south-east Wales for much of the later seventeenth century. In order to explain the process by which religious identity became politicised amongst some members of the Catholic community, insights drawn from the work of social psychologists will be used. These extensive investigations of social identity in various human cultures have highlighted some key factors that influence the development of politicised identity in subordinate groups, and the effect that institutionalised prejudice can have on political integration. Such ideas can provide insight into why political conflict became the dominant aspect of inter-group relations in some parts of Wales, while playing little part in others. Through detailed examination of the complex issue of social identity, this chapter will suggest that Catholics were far from isolated within English and Welsh society in the seventeenth century. As Catholics sought to create and promote a positive interpretation of their religious identity they sought to exploit the major cultural changes that were occurring, and also became participants in the many political conflicts that developed at both a regional and national level.

Since the 1960s, the concept of identity has come to play a prominent role in all branches of the psychological and social sciences, and has also influenced many areas of historical and literary research. This increased interest in identity amongst

academics has accompanied a growth in the importance of identity in the wider world. The role of ethnic, religious, gender and sexual identity in the political culture of the twentieth century had stimulated interest in this increasingly prominent aspect of human personality.[11] However, despite its importance, a coherent, cross-disciplinary definition of identity has not yet been formulated. While theorists and writers have frequently posited their own definitions of identity, these have often been shaped by their own research focus. This has led to the creation of as many definitions of identity as there are studies examining it.[12]

While some have focused on the individual and how identity is constructed, others have sought to explain how identity is shaped by social contexts and its effect on inter- and intra-group relations. Definitions of identity can be primarily divided into so-called "hard" and "soft" classifications. Hard definitions have suggested that identity is an essential and primary part of personality, with a high degree of stability, unchanged by social circumstance. In contrast, soft definitions suggest that identity is a multi-layered construct that reflects the wide variety of relationships and environments that form the individual's social world.[13] The notion of socially constructed identities has gained considerable support from both psychologists and sociologists who have utilised this concept to explain social behaviour at both an individual and group level. While it might appear that soft definitions of identity suggest that this apparently fundamental aspect of self-perception is an aberration, the reality is far more complex. Empirical research into the construction of identity has

[11] R. Brubaker and F. Cooper, "Beyond 'Identity'", *TS*, 29, 1, 2000, pp. 3-5; L. Huddy, "From Social to Political Identity: A Critical Examination of Social Identity Theory", *PPsych*, 22, 1, 2001, p. 127.
[12] M. B. Brewer, "The Many Faces of Social Identity: Implications for Political Psychology", *PPsych*, 22, 1, 2001, p. 115.
[13] Brubaker and Cooper, "Beyond 'Identity'", pp. 10-4

clearly demonstrated that, even in its most fleeting forms, identity has very profound and real impact on behaviour and self-esteem.[14]

Historians have not been immune to the emergence of identity theory and have used the concept of identity to explore new and intriguing aspects of past cultures. Throughout the twentieth century, historians engaged with and influenced the emergence of identity politics. Growing awareness of gender inequality and the need to engage with the female historical perspective, had a profound impact on historians' understanding of the past. The emergence of post-colonial societies similarly shaped discussions of empire and race relations.[15] The development of social and cultural perspectives as key modes of study led to an increasing interest in changing notions of community and the self. In turn, historians challenged assumptions about the unchanging nature of racial, religious and gendered identities. Even the very notion of the self and the point at which conceptions of the individual first arose in a modern sense in Western society have been the focus of substantial debate. The massive socio-economic changes that shaped the early modern and modern eras have been understood to have profoundly affected interpersonal relationships and conceptions of identity. Traditionally, these changes have been understood as resulting in the decline of the co-operative, communal social structures of the medieval world, replacing them with more attenuated relationships and the growth of 'possessive individualism' that in turn drove further capitalist expansion.[16]

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[14] Perhaps the most potent demonstrations of how identity can elicit sometimes extreme forms of social behaviour have been in the psychological experiments conducted as part of research into realistic conflict theory (RCT) and social identity theory (SIT).
[15] Wurgaft, "Identity in World History", pp. 74-7, 77-84.
[16] C. Muldrew, "From a 'light cloak' to an 'iron cage': historical changes in the relation between community and individualism", in A. Shepard and P. Withington, *Communities in Early Modern England: Networks, Place, Rhetoric* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2000), p. 156.

However, such views have been challenged, perhaps in their most extreme form by Macfarlane's assertions that rational, 'market-oriented' individualism has been part of English society since the thirteenth century.[17] While Macfarlane's argument has received significant criticism, the mutability of the definition of the self, its relationship with ideas of community and the alteration of these by the transformation of medieval intellectual culture in the Reformation and Renaissance, are important points of discussion.[18] In recognising the degree to which individuals' conception of themselves has and still is fundamentally shaped by social relationships, the importance of the religious and social divisions created by the break-up of Christian hegemony under the Church of Rome in changing, rather than creating new kinds of identity, can begin to be appreciated. While divisions had always existed between Christians, the emergence of new and varied Protestant churches created key liturgical and theological distinctions. Even the terminology used to identify the distinct churches that emerged from the Reformation was contested, as different religious groups sought to establish their own identity in opposition to those of other denominations. The use of the term "Catholic" to describe the Church of Rome and her followers was vehemently contested by many of the Protestant churches. Along with other Christian denominations, Anglicans sought to exercise their own claim to universality and the heritage of the ancient Church of the Apostles.[19] Such conflicts suggest the way in which religious identity was shaped by the conflicts that arose from the destabilisation of Christendom.

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[17] A. Macfarlane, *The Origins of English Individualism: The Family, Property, and Social Transition* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1978) p. 163

[18] S. D. White and R. T. Vann, "The Invention of English Individualism: Alan Macfarlane and the Modernization of Pre-Modern England", *SH*, 8, 3, 1983, pp. 345-363; Muldrew, "From a 'light cloak' to an 'iron cage'", pp. 156-9.

[19] H. Thurston, "Catholic", *Catholic Encyclopaedia*, 1908, accessed at http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03449a.htm, on 17th May 2012.

As historians have turned their attention towards more diverse areas of cultural development and world history, the role of identity in social conflict and co-operation in the past has become more pronounced. Historians seeking to create an 'integrative and ecumenical world history' have perhaps faced the challenges and complexities of identity in the most obvious manner.[20] Their examination of how and why intercultural boundaries have shifted has led them to face not only the wide variety of cultural identities that existed within the societies they study, but also their own. Issues of ethnocentrism and assumption can present stark problems in a discipline that has been profoundly influenced by poststructuralist concerns over discourse and social context.

The emergence of identity theory has encouraged an interdisciplinary approach to the complex idea of identity. Wurgraft has argued that it is near impossible for historians to avoid entering the realm of the psychological and anthropological when considering this area.[21] He suggests that the critique of national identity that has emerged in anthropology since the 1980s, combined with long-standing psychoanalytical consideration of identity more generally, has helped shape contemporary historical analysis. Historians of gender have also sought to examine concepts of female and male identity by drawing on social scientific theories.[22] While some historians may reject the notion that social scientific theories are useful in guiding historical analysis, it would seem that it has been near impossible for them to ignore the implications of identity theory in developing our understanding of the past.

In their examination of identity, historians have also highlighted the fundamental importance of social relationships in its creation. It has been suggested that the concepts of identity and community have a reciprocal relationship, each shaping and

[20] Wurgaft, "Identity in World History", p. 67.
[21] Ibid, p. 68.
[22] Ibid, pp. 74-84.

legitimating the other.[23] McClain has suggested in her examination of early modern Catholicism that the concepts of community and identity are distinct, but are closely linked. She suggests that identity reflects perceptions of sameness and difference, perceptions that are built upon in the formation of community.[24] She goes as far as to suggest that the connection between identity and the envisioning of a distinct community are so significant that English Catholics could create a sense of shared identity with Catholics that they had never met. The notion of a wider Catholic Church that could stretch across Europe, shaped the religious identity of the Church's followers in England.[25]

The relationship between the individual's self-perception and their social circumstances is not simply suggested by historical observations, but has long been proposed by social psychologists. Social identity theory (SIT) and the related theory of self-categorisation empirically examine the social context of identity.[26] SIT was proposed in the various empirical studies conducted by Tajfel and Turner and their collaborators. The theory sought to explain 'the heightened identification with the in-group' that had been regarded 'almost as an epiphenomenon of intergroup conflict' in older theories.[27] In developing SIT, Tajfel and others examined how an individual came to identify with the group, how this aspect of identity was maintained and its effect on intra- and intergroup behaviour.[28]

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[23] W. Frijhoff, "Shifting Identities in Hostile Settings: Towards a Comparison of the Catholic Communities in Early Modern Britain and the Northern Netherlands", in Kaplan et al (eds), *Catholic Communities in Protestant States: Britain and the Netherlands*, p. 14.
[24] McClain, *Lest We Be Damned*, p. 234.
[25] Ibid, p. 242.
[26] H. Tajfel, "Experiments in intergroup discrimination", *SA*, 223, 5, 1970, pp. 96–102; H. Tajfel, M. G. Billig, R. P. Bundy and C. Flament, "Social Categorization and Intergroup Behaviour", *EJSP*, 1971, Vol. 1, No. 2, pp. 149-178; H. Tajfel, "Social psychology of intergroup behaviour", *ARP*, 33, 1982, pp. 1-39.
[27] Tajfel and Turner, "The Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Behaviour", p. 9.
[28] H. Tajfel, "Cognitive Aspects of Prejudice", *JSI*, 25, 4, pp. 79-97; Idem, "Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations", pp. 1-39; Tajfel et al, "Social Categorization and Intergroup Behaviour", pp. 149-78; Tajfel and Turner, "The Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Behaviour", pp.

SIT suggests that identity is made up of both personal and social elements and that perceived membership of social groups is a fundamental part of how an individual defines themselves and how they delineate their position within their social environment. The theory proposes three key points about the nature of social identity. Firstly, it suggests that all individuals seek to maintain or enhance their self-esteem and strive for a positive view of themselves. Secondly, they argue that social groups and their members are associated with positive or negative attributes, meaning that social identity based on group membership may be positive or negative. Finally, the evaluation of the individual's own social group is 'determined with reference to other specific groups through social comparison of value laden attributes and characteristics'.[29] If these comparisons are positively discrepant then self-esteem is increased, while a negative discrepancy leads to a decrease. Tajfel and Turner went on to identify three classes of variables that effected intergroup differentiation. They noted that individuals had to have internalised their group membership as part of their conception of self. Furthermore, social situations had to allow for comparisons to be made between groups so that rational attributes could be selected and evaluated. Lastly, it was suggested that in-groups do not compare themselves with all possible out-groups. Comparability was determined by similarity, proximity and situational salience.[30]

Since its proposal in the late 1970s, SIT has proved extremely influential and has led to a much greater appreciation of the importance of social identity to the individual. The view that social identity is shaped and reshaped by individuals depending on circumstance or psychological need, means that SIT posits a "soft" definition of

[29] Tajfel and Turner, "The Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Behaviour", p. 16.
[30] Ibid, p. 17.

identity. However, it should not be suggested that because identity is constructed it is any less significant a part of human personality. While many of the experiments that have been used to research social identity have focused on the minimum social conditions needed to create group identification, the theory has highlighted the great importance of social identity in social interaction and the real impact it has on behaviour.[31]

Despite the influence of SIT in the field of social psychology and its application in several areas of in-group/out-group interaction, the theory has had virtually no impact on historical research. However, SIT provides historians with a clear, useable definition of identity that can be applied to aid understanding of the often inexplicable behaviour in conditions of both group hostility and co-operation. Furthermore, it helps to provide some explanation of the instability of relations between communities as they develop over time. This chapter will use the definition of identity proposed by Tajfel, which states that identity is 'that *part* of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership.'[32] This definition reflects the complexity of this multi-layered aspect of personality. Identity is not simply a product of cold comparison between the individual and the social world that surrounds him or her, but incorporates significant emotional attachments to particular aspects of the self.

For historians studying the experiences of Catholics in early modern England and Wales, SIT offers promising empirically based insights as to how religious identity formed in this period. Catholics were viewed as familiar, and yet somehow foreign

[31] Idem, "Experiments in intergroup discrimination", pp. 96–102; Idem, "Social psychology", pp. 1-39; Tajfel and Turner, "The social identity theory of intergroup behaviour", pp. 7-24.
[32] H. Tajfel, *Human groups and social categories: Studies in social psychology* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1981) p. 251.

and other, and faced discrimination and prejudice that limited their ability to participate in the cultural and political life of the country. Faced with such strongly defined religious boundaries, Catholics developed their own specific social identity that has not been fully examined or explained by historians. Understanding the development and importance of this identity to individuals and the Catholic community as a whole, allows the historian to produce a full and vivid picture of the social world of the early modern Catholic. Historians can move beyond the labels that were applied to Catholics by others, and begin to see them as complex social beings, with intricate emotional and psychological lives.

Given this fundamental link between the individual and the community with which he or she identifies, it is perhaps unsurprising that historians have noted how social changes which impact on a community as a whole also affect the social identity of its members. Catholics living in seventeenth-century Wales can be seen as an example of a community undergoing considerable change. Across the British Isles, the political and religious position of Catholics had been in a state of flux since the break with Rome in the 1530s. The oscillation between Catholic and Protestant regimes that followed meant that the transition to an Anglican Church operating outside of Papal control was far from smooth. The Jesuit Robert Persons proposed that this change had been marked by the collapse of the hierarchical, medieval Church, with little fight against the Elizabethan settlement, leaving English Catholicism to be saved by an influx of missionaries.[33] This conception of early modern Catholic history

[33] *The memoirs of Father Robert Persons*, ed. J. H. Pollen, (London, Catholic Record Society, 1906) pp. 48-63, cited in C. Haigh, "From Monopoly to Minority: Catholicism in Early Modern England", *TRHS*,5th Ser.,Vol. 31, 1981, p.130; R. Parsons, *Briefe Apologie or Defence of the Cathalike Ecclesiastical Hierarchie* (London, c. 1601) fos. 1-4, cited in Haigh, "From Monopoly to Minority", pp. 130-131; *The Jesuit's Memorial for the Intended Reformation of England*, ed. H. Gee (London, 1690), pp. 2, 4, 20-2, 49-51, cited in Haigh, "From Monopoly to Minority", pp. 130-131; Haigh, "From Monopoly to Minority", p. 131.

has been challenged by Haigh, who termed it 'Catholic whiggery'.[34] While the suggestion that the emergence of a seigneurial structure was far from inevitable has clear merit, it is important also to acknowledge the degree to which the changes in Catholic life and practices that occurred after the Reformation were radical and differed from region to region. As has been discussed previously, the Catholic community in Wales did not simply evolve from a medieval structure to a seigneurial one in all areas of the Principality. Yet, as with many Christian communities across Europe, English and Welsh Catholics faced the problem of major cultural changes as their religion transitioned from the dominant spiritual culture to an increasingly marginalised sect.[35]

Catholic identity was also being changed by the Catholic Reformation inaugurated by the Council of Trent (1545-1563), which established new standards of clerical behaviour and relations between the clergy and the laity. It also encouraged a greater internalisation of Catholic spirituality and attitude to traditional forms of ritual worship.[36] Aspects of medieval practice were deemed unacceptable, while concern over the "superstitious" beliefs of the less educated revitalised efforts to ground all ritualistic behaviour within a clear Christian doctrine. The emergence of reformed religious belief, often defined explicitly in opposition to Protestantism, was crucial to the cultural, social and political expression of Catholic identity throughout seventeenth-century Europe.

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[34] Haigh, "From Monopoly to Minority", pp. 129-147.

[35] McClain, "Without Church, Cathedral, or Shrine, p. 382; R. L. Williams, "Forbidden Sacred Spaces in Reformation England" in A. Spicer and S. Hamilton (ed.), *Defining the holy: sacred space in medieval and early modern Europe*, pp. 96-7.

[36] K. P. Luna, "'Popular Catholicism' and the Catholic Reformation" in K. M. Cornerford and H. M. Pabel (eds), *Early modern Catholicism: Essays in honour of John W. O'Malley, S.J.* (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2001) p. 114; A. Walsham, "Holywell: contesting sacred space in post-Reformation Wales", in W. Coster and A. Spicer (eds), *Sacred Space in Early Modern Europe* (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2005) pp. 225-9.

However, distinguishing what constituted Catholic identity in this period is not without its difficulties. The dominance of the rarefied social elite in early modern society makes it is exceptionally difficult to discern the differences between elite and popular Catholic identity. The fact that access to priests and religious services were predicated on the provisions made by the gentry for supporting missionaries, combined with the fact that the priesthood was often drawn from this class, meant that the views of the educated elite were often dominant in the surviving evidence. In this chapter, much of the discussion will, by necessity, focus on written accounts relating to Catholic identity. This allows the formation of Catholic identity in Wales to be placed in a wider context. However, the literary nature of such material means that they were produced and consumed by the cultural elite. This reflected the fact that they had the greatest ability to participate in political and legal activities. The fact that Welsh Catholics, as with all communities in early modern societies, were hierarchical does not mean that the values and activities of those drawn from the lower orders can be ignored. However, in order to locate the idea of Catholic identity within the wider ideas expressed by missionary priests and writers, it is necessary to focus initially on the ideas expressed by the literate elite.

It was the social elite that were the primary target audience of the spiritual guides and controversial literature that appeared from the late sixteenth century onwards. The limitations that were placed on the missionary clergy meant that few Catholics had regular access to the clergy.[37] The production of such texts was aimed at maintaining the allegiance and religious principles of those at risk of becoming isolated from the support and control of Church authority. Some of these guides also provide clear

[37] R. L. Williams, "Forbidden Sacred Spaces in Reformation England" in A. Spicer and S. Hamilton (ed.), *Defining the holy: sacred space in medieval and early modern Europe* (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2005) p. 99.

instruction about what behaviour and attitudes were expected of the new Catholic minorities living under Protestant rule. These instructions suggest how Catholic identity was being formed in these trying circumstances, and how this identity developed in the post-Reformation era. Robert Southwell's *Short Rule of good lyfe* was initially written to provide support and guidance for his protector, the countess of Arundel.[38] However, following his martyrdom, the work was circulated in manuscript and print amongst the Catholic aristocracy and gentry. It continued to be printed and circulated throughout the seventeenth century.[39] Southwell's guide was designed for the Catholic gentry and aristocracy, as shown by the inherent assumptions about the reader's status in discussions of the duty to ensure the religious education of servants and children.[40] However, Southwell's conceptions of a pious Catholic are more generally applicable and suggest the kind of exemplary behaviour, intellectual life and social conduct that he sought to promote.

This guide provided details of how Catholics should live piously and observe their religion privately, demonstrating how leading missionary figures had been forced to accept the failure of attempts to reclaim England. Southwell provided guidance to his readers on many aspects of their religious life from the frame of mind they should adopt when taking meals, to the time they should rise on feast days.[41] Reflecting the changing hopes of Catholics who could expect little immediate relief from anti-Catholic legislation and persecution, Southwell advised his readers how to maintain their religious identity and behave with others – Catholic and Protestant.[42] He outlined

[38] Robert Southwell, *A Short Rule of good lyfe* (St. Omers, 1622); N. P. Brown, "Southwell, Robert [St Robert Southwell] (1561–1595)", *ODNB*, accessed at http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/26064, 4th March 2010
[39] Southwell, *A Short Rule of good lyfe, passim.*
[40] "Southwell, Robert", *ODNB*,
[41] Southwell, *A Short Rule of good lyfe*, pp. 73-4, 82-5.
[42] Ibid, pp. 51-9.

the key religious practices and rituals that could be observed by Catholics while they had only sporadic contact with the organised Church. These patterns of observance were to prove crucial in maintaining a distinct Catholic identity in the absence of a formal Catholic Church.

The Catholic identity promoted by Southwell was modest, charitable, prudent and moderate in all things. In keeping with his emphasis of internalised meditation upon questions of faith and conduct, Southwell implored his readers to constantly reflect upon their actions, thoughts and feelings inspired by even the most mundane aspects of their lives.[43] In the absence of an institutional Church, it could be argued that the cultivation of this kind of private reflection aided the maintenance and development of Catholic identity. While Catholics living within a state still loyal to Rome enjoyed far greater opportunities for face to face contact with other Catholics and their clergy, those living in England were encouraged, through these kinds of texts, to maintain a pattern of private religious observance that was recognisably Catholic. Southwell, and other writers, provided their readers with a blueprint of pious Catholic thought and behaviour that could be drawn from as they forged a religious identity that suited their challenging social and cultural position.

The emphasis placed by Southwell on this expression of spirituality in all aspects of life reflects not only the reality of how the community needed to live, but also the author's desire to see Catholic identity lie at the centre of the laity's lives. However, even within wealthy homes, the accommodation of Catholic worship within the domestic environment could present difficulties, as the display of Catholic devotional objects or texts risked openly advertising the family's religious identity.[44] However,

[43] For examples in Southwell, *A Short Rule of good lyfe*, see pp. 24, 26, 53, 62-63.
[44] Williams, "Forbidden Sacred Spaces in Reformation England", p. 101.

the sacraments continued to occupy a central role within religious life. The Council of Trent had placed considerable emphasis on the role of priests and the sacraments as the means by which God's grace was expressed within the corporeal world.[45] Southwell emphasised the importance of participating in these rituals when they become available. He recommended that confession should be taken at least twice a year and used as an opportunity to reflect upon what transgressions had led them away from their role in 'the service of God'.[46] Access to the sacraments, while difficult for most Catholics, does not seem to have been impossible during the mid to late seventeenth century. Those living in London had access to the chapels of the foreign embassies and the Catholic queens of the Stuarts.[47] However, in rural areas, particularly a more remote region like Wales, access might be expected to be more difficult. Yet, the sacraments of baptism, marriage and the Mass were regularly performed in houses in a number of counties. Shrines also operated at a near public level in both North and South Wales. Mass was reported to be frequently performed at the Jesuit mission centre at the Cwm.[48] For Welsh Catholics, the observance of the key religious rituals surrounding birth, marriage and death, as well as the regular cycle of attending Masses, was not as rare and difficult as might be expected. These rituals all symbolically represented the individual's membership of the community and can, therefore, be seen as significant demonstrations of the community's shared identity as Catholics. Furthermore, their universality of form linked Catholics living in relatively

[45] McClain, *Lest We Be Damned*, pp. 36-37.
[46] Southwell, *A Short Rule of good lyfe*, pp. 18, 85-90.
[47] McClain, *Lest We Be Damned*, p. 185
[48] Sir John Trevor, *An Abstract Of Several Examinations Taken upon Oath, in the Counties of Monmouth and Hereford* (London,1678) pp. 3-15; C. M. Seguin, "Cures and Controversy in Early Modern Wales: The Struggle to Control St. Winifred's Well", *NAJWS*, Vol. 3, No. 2, 2003, pp. 1-17; Walsham, "Holywell", pp. 222-34.

isolated communities on the fringes of Europe with those that worshiped and lived under the protection of a Catholic government.

By preserving the sacraments as physical manifestations of God's grace, Catholics contributed to a ritual expression of their social identity that distinguished them from the religious groups that surrounded them. Their importance continued to be emphasised by Catholic writers during the early Restoration. Such authors sought to directly compare the meaning and importance of these rituals with the interpretation proposed by Protestants. The anonymous author of *The Catholick Mirrour* (1662) used his text to portray Catholic sacramental teachings as reflecting not only the authority of the Church, but also the Scriptures.[49] Illustrating his points with quotations from both the Old and New Testaments, the author sought to draw attention to the authority of Catholic teachings and justify the distinctive practices of the community as fulfilling their role as followers of Christ.[50] Following an extensive discussion of the justification for the maintenance of the sacraments of the Mass and penance, as well as Catholic prayers to the saints and veneration of images, the reader is led to consider the nature of Catholicism. Rejecting the claims of all other Christian churches to be called Catholic, the author describes the Roman Church is "plain in its agreement with God's word'.[51] While such statements are clearly the product of blinkered, propagandist view of the Catholic Church's activities in Europe and the New World, they are informative of the conception of Church that some Catholics wished to promote in England. The continued observance of all seven sacraments was seen by the author as indicative of the Church's ultimate fulfilment of Christ's teachings and its divine origins.

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[49] Anon., *The Catholick Mirrour* (London, 1662).
[50] Ibid, *passim*.
[51] Ibid, p. 104.

While the writings of some authors sort to advance a cohesive view of Catholicism, particularly in the face of Protestantism, in reality it would be inaccurate to consider this as reflective of the real nature of Catholic identity. Rather it should be taken as an example of how some Catholic English writers wished their community to be seen. In reality, splits between Catholics had a significant effect on the community's culture and political identity. The split within English Catholicism between those who supported the Papacy's political powers and those allied to the Blackloists had been seen as a virtual schism within the community.[52] In the face of such increasing factionalism, it might appear that the creation and maintenance of a Catholic identity would prove extremely challenging. In a fractured community what were the key ideological and doctrinal points around which identity could be upheld? The importance of the sacraments as vital Christian rituals appear to have remained unquestioned, indicating their importance to Catholic religious identity even in times of discord and vociferous disagreement. Henry Holden argued that these rituals were the means by which 'God giveth grace to those who come worthily prepared to them'.[53]

While all these writings emphasise the importance of the sacraments as divine evidence of God's grace, the sacraments, like all ritual, are examples of implicit communication. In his anthropological study of cultural symbolism, Turner argued that ambiguity was inherent to such representations and reflected their multivocality.[54] Multivocality allowed symbolic acts and images to unify the community by encouraging individuals to perceive a "sameness" that is shared with other members of the group.[55] By creating ambiguous symbolic rituals, the social group provides

[52] Collins, "Restoration Anti-Catholicism", pp. 285-6.
[53] Henry Holden, *The Analysis of Divine Faith* (Paris, 1658), pp. 235-6.
[54] V. Turner, *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1967) *passim*.
[55] Ibid.

opportunities for members to impose their interpretations onto the ritual behaviour or icon without jeopardising the community's integrity.

Eriksen concludes that many of the symbolic rituals that are used within Catholic worship are clearly multivocal in nature, allowing them to be interpreted in various ways by the Church's members. Eriksen suggests that the consecrated Host can be seen as a 'liminal object forming a bridge between this world and the spiritual realm'.[56] However, it could also be argued that the priest himself is a liminal object in the ritual of the Mass, as his exclusive ability to perform the miracle of consecration means that he acts to connect the laity to God's grace. The liminal status of the priesthood had been demonstrated in the pre-Reformation Church through their celibacy and distinct dress. While these visual and social demarcations of the special liminal status of the priesthood were not continuously seen after the Reformation, the centrality of the Mass and the other sacraments to Catholic religious identity remained. In an era when toleration could change by region and over time, Catholics were forced to adapt their patterns of observance and openness about their religion so avoid persecution. In such an environment, multivocality may have supported variation in religious culture within an overarching definition of Catholicism

A similar ambiguity of meaning can also be discerned in the sacrament of penance. Southwell suggested that the preparation for, and making of, a full confession provided the opportunity for Catholics to examine and assess their spiritual progress towards a moral ideal.[57] However, the act of confession can possess a number of different meanings for participants. It provides as opportunity for counselling and support from a community leader in times of difficulty. Yet it could also be interpreted

[56] T. H. Eriksen, *Small Places, Large Issues: An Introduction to Social and Cultural Anthropology* (London, Pluto Press, 1995) p. 207.
[57] Southwell, *A Short Rule of good lyfe*, pp. 85-90.

as an example of the Church seeking to impose its moral authority as the sole means by which the individual can be forgiven. For Catholics living within an Anglican society, the distinctly Catholic practice of making confession to a priest as a means of accessing absolution, reaffirms their membership of the Church.

While the maintenance of a distinct religious culture allowed Catholics to discern their sameness and establish a basis for the community's religious identity, it could not be created in isolation. In many ways Catholic identity in Wales was most easily identifiable when religious conflict was at the fore. Based on notions of similarity and difference, Catholic identity not only reflected the group's shared cultural and social values and practices, but also its perceived distinction from other groups. The central importance of comparison as a means of establishing the boundaries of an in-group has been consistently noted by both social psychologists and anthropologists. Cohen has suggested that an awareness of culture itself only becomes part of people's consciousness 'when they stand at its boundaries'.[58] In the seminal Robber's Cave Experiments, Sherif, Harvey, White, Hood and Sherif found that the simple awareness of another group's existence, even without contact, could induce members of the in-group to begin comparing themselves favourably with the out-group.[59]

The most obvious and clearest point of comparison for English and Welsh Catholics was the Anglican religious tradition that had come to replace their Church as the dominant religious group. The degree to which Catholics were able to maintain social distance between themselves and the Anglican community that surrounded them, depended on their financial circumstances and social opportunities. Those who

[58] A. P. Cohen, *The Symbolic Construction of Community* (Chichester, Tavistock Publications, 1985).
[59] M. Sherif, O. J. Harvey, B. J. White, W. R. Hood and C. W. Sherif, *The Robber's Cave Experiments: Intergroup Conflict and Cooperation* (Middleton, Weslayan University Press, 1961). Further evidence of the ease with which intergroup conflict can be created, even when group membership was determined by random distribution, can be seen in Tajfel et al, "Social categorisation and intergroup behaviour", pp. 149-78.

refused to conform to the Anglican Church faced real financial persecution, which was difficult to mitigate due to legal proscriptions that prevented Catholics from accessing the judiciary and Parliament. As a result, strict recusancy was not an option for most Catholics. Only the wealthiest were able to consistently pay the fines levied against those who failed to attend their parish church. In some areas, wealthy Catholics could offer some protection for their household, tenants and other poorer co-religionists in the surrounding region, allowing them to maintain some degree of recusancy. Physical remoteness often allowed such activities to go unscrutinised by members of the Protestant elite. However, all Catholics found it difficult to avoid associating with Anglicans all together. For those Catholics occupying the middling and lower levels of society, complete recusancy and separation from Anglicanism must have been impossible. The interdependence of individuals in early modern society meant that social exchange with those of a different religious outlook was necessary. It was in these circumstances that the social interaction crucial to awareness of religious culture occurred.[60]

The comparative nature of Catholic identity was not just the product of everyday interactions between these two groups, but was also part of a wider context where Protestant and Catholic theologians and writers fought out an ideological war. Since the very earliest days of the European Reformation, the burgeoning print culture had been used by both sides to further their own religious views. These disputes had not declined during the seventeenth century. Many of these texts engaged in active and direct dispute with those that opposed them, explicitly criticising the views that the opposition espoused.[61]

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[60] Walsham, *Charitable Hatred*, p. 306.

[61] Raymond has suggested that a propaganda war broke out in England from the reign of Mary I onwards. Supporters of both sides of the confessional divide sought to defend their religious positions while attacking those of their opponents; J. Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early*

Such debates over the various controversies of the Protestant and Catholic Churches could appear to verge on pettiness. However, they had wider implications for English and Welsh Catholics. Following the re-establishment of Protestantism under Elizabeth, the threat represented by Catholicism at home and abroad became quickly apparent. Following the promulgation of *Regnans in Excelsis* (1570), the Elizabethan regime was faced with a very real threat from extremist Catholics actively seeking to return England to the Roman Church. In this charged environment, anti-Catholicism quickly became an established part of political culture and continued to dominate relations between Catholics and the state long after the threat of militant Catholicism had begun to decline.[62]

Anti-Catholicism was far from unique to England and Wales. Sectarian prejudice on both sides of the confessional divide represented a fundamental part of social and political conflicts that arose within and between the European states throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[63] However, in England, anti-Catholicism came to play a prominent role in the culture of the country and has been described as 'the pervasive political pathology of the age'.[64] However, the nature of this discourse appears to have developed overtime into a complex and often contradictory system of prejudice. Its effect on the lives of Catholics remained profound. Wiener suggests that anti-Catholicism had become a significant part of national identity by the end of Elizabeth's reign, a product not only of the threats of Papal and Spanish ambitions, but also of English visions of Catholicism as a

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Modern England (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003) p. 15. Greisner has pointed out that the proliferation of religious print as a written extension of the often violent religious conflicts of the Reformation, was evidenced in Central Europe also; D. J. Greisner, "Catholics and Anabaptists in Moravia", in K. M. Comerford and H. M Pabel, *Early Modern Catholicism: Essays in Honour of John W. O'Malley* (Toronto, University of Toronto, 2001) p. 134.

[62] Wiener, "The beleaguered isle", p. 32.

[63] Walsham, *Charitable Hatred*, p. 114-115.

[64] J. Collins, "Restoration Anti-Catholicism: A Prejudice in Motion", in C. W. A. Prior and G. Burgess (eds), *England's Wars of Religion, Revisited*, (Farnham, Ashgate, 2011) p. 284.

monolithic world power.[65] She highlights the profound effect this prejudice had upon the lives of all Catholics, with state imposed sanctions impinging on the lives of the community as a whole.[66] For Wiener, a key feature of anti-Catholicism was the generalisation that all Catholics, regardless of their personal views, were traitors and, therefore, should not be tolerated.[67] The failure to distinguish between those seeking to depose the Protestant state and those who were loyal and simply wished to follow their own conscience, led to the introduction of blanket prohibitions that forced Catholics 'who might have been content with toleration, to contemplate desperate solutions'.[68]

However, in acknowledging the negativity of such sectarianism, it is imperative that historians do not simply dismiss it as the product of illogicality. Lake has rightly warned against regarding anti-Catholicism as 'irrational paranoia' that descended and lifted without explanation.[69] He suggests that anti-Catholicism was 'the most important example of that process of binary opposition, inversion or the argument from contraries which... played so central a part in both the learned and popular culture of early modern Europe'.[70] The depiction of Catholicism as an anti-religion allowed Protestants to portray the Roman Church and its followers as usurpers who had replaced Christ as head of the Church with the Pope and also sought to usurp the divinely anointed monarch. The contemporary view of the Pope as the Antichrist, led to the insinuation that the practices of Catholics constituted devil-worship and the

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[65] Wiener, "The beleaguered isle", pp. 27-29, 35.
[66] Ibid, p. 41.
[67] Ibid, p. 37.
[68] Ibid, p. 41.
[69] P. Lake, "Anti-puritanism: The structure of a prejudice", in K. Fincham and P. Lake (eds), *Religious Politics in Post-Reformation England* (Woodbridge, Boydell Press, 2006) p. 81; Collins, "Restoration Anti-Catholicism", p. 284.
[70] P. Lake, "Anti-popery: the structure of a prejudice", in R. Cust and A. Hughes (eds), *Conflict in Early Stuart England: Studies in Religion and Politics, 1603-1642* (London, Longman, 1989) p. 73.

inversion of Christian values.[71] The ceremonies and rituals of the Church were seen as purely human in origin, while emphasis upon salvation through works appeared to hypocritically contradict Catholics' professed belief in the salvation of humanity by Christ's Crucifixion. Catholics themselves were depicted as being irrational, foolish and gullible in following the teachings of their clergy and accepting the authority of the Pope to interpret Christian doctrine.[72] This image of Catholicism promoted in Protestant polemics was a negative reflection of Protestantism. As a result, the negative attributes imposed upon Catholicism equated to positive political and cultural values amongst Protestants.[73]

While the increasing prominence of anti-Catholicism in the seventeenth century has been well documented, what it actually was has been laid open to debate. Lake rejects the suggestion that Protestant criticism and discrimination against Catholics was a 'mere prejudice', suggesting that it should instead be regarded as an 'ideology'.[74] He argues that viewing anti-Catholicism simply as a prejudice led to it being 'considered as a wholly irrational and unitary thing'.[75] Lake's criticism of the view that anti-Catholicism is a 'cloud of unknowing' is echoed and supported by Collins, who argues that anti-popery in the 1650s to 1670s were multi-layered in nature.[76] Collins argues that Protestant anti-Catholicism was not simply religiously motivated, but also resulted from the political danger that Catholicism presented to the English state. From this perspective, Catholics were fundamentally untrustworthy because the Pope was seen as the leader of an international conspiracy to bring down the Protestant

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[71] Anon., *Antichrist Unhooded; or An Explanation of the Names and Titles by which the Scripture exhibits Antichrist to the World* (London, 1664), *passim*; Anon, *A Letter from the Devil to the Pope*, (London, 1670), *passim.*
[72] Anon., *The Character of a Papist* (London, 1673) *passim.*
[73] Ibid, pp. 73-5.
[74] Idem, "Anti-puritanism", pp. 81, 82.
[75] Idem, "Anti-popery", p. 73.
[76] Idem, "Anti-puritanism", p. 81; Collins, "Restoration Anti-Catholicism", pp. 285-6.

regime.[77] However, the Oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy used to bar Catholics from positions of political office and local government, reveal the true complexity of this prejudice. Because the oaths required Catholics to deny fundamental aspects of their faith, they discriminated on the basis of doctrine rather than simple politics.[78] This demonstrates the extent to which anti-Catholicism was a complex and multifaceted prejudice that mixed religious and political concerns.

However, Collins does highlight how anti-Catholicism cannot be understood solely as political in nature through his consideration of the response to the Blackloist faction following the Restoration. The views espoused by Blacklo and his allies in the 1650s had led to a major split between those who supported their Gallican views on Catholic loyalty, and those who continued to support the Papacy as the prime base of Catholic political allegiance. The negotiations for toleration that occurred between the Blackloists and the Interregnum government only further inflamed this crisis.[79] These divisions within the English Chapter continued to rage on through the seventeenth century, raising their ugly head in the betrayals and counter-betrayals of the Popish Plot.[80]

However, as Collins illustrates, Anglican politicians and writers criticised and persecuted Catholics on both sides of this divide with equal vigour. Despite the fact that Blacklo and his allies advocated the kind of loyalty to the Protestant state that had been required of Catholics for generations, no attempt was made to tolerate those who espoused such views. Collins suggests that this universal attack upon Catholicism

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[77] Collins, "Restoration Anti-Catholicism", pp. 285-6.
[78] Ibid, p. 288.
[79] E. Burton, "Thomas White", *Catholic Encyclopaedia*, 1912, accessed at http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15613c.htm, 5th March 2012.
[80] The Blackloist, John Sergeant, testified against the Jesuit, Robert Pugh, at Newcastle. This led to Pugh's death in Newgate in 1679. Pugh had written against Blacklo and his followers and had collected a number of letters that had been sent between members of the group in the 1640s and 1650s. These were published as revenge against the Blackloists in the 1680s. Collins, "Restoration Anti-Catholicism", p. 300.

reflected the reality of Restoration anti-Catholicism, which was based on considerable concern over moves to tolerate Catholics. In these circumstances, Protestant polemicists condemned conservative Catholics for their Papal loyalty and the Blackloists for the decision to make peace with Cromwell.[81]

Collins has suggested that in accepting a political/religious distinction between popery and Catholicism, historians have served to maintain the image that England was a beacon of tolerance because it only persecuted Catholics for political reasons rather than suppressing them wholesale as Protestants were in France.[82] Furthermore, it also maintains an image of Catholicism in the seventeenth century that has more in common with the sixteenth. The division between Seculars, depicted as working priests, and the more politically subversive Jesuits continues to be the dominant paradigm when considering the nature of Catholic identity in these turbulent years.[83] I would suggest that such views of anti-Catholicism as reflecting political concerns rather than also incorporating sectarian intolerance has made it more difficult to contextualise anti-Catholicism in the proper fashion. It creates a false impression that anti-Catholicism is different from other forms of prejudice, making it impossible to understand it as part of a wider social environment where cultural and physical distinctions effected the distribution of power.

While individual Catholics and Protestants were undoubtedly able to co-exist in a peaceful, even co-operative manner, anti-Catholicism had become institutionalised within Anglican society. It was a pervasive distortion of social relations that influenced Catholics' attempts to define their social identity. From this perspective,

[81] Ibid, pp. 290-5.
[82] Ibid, pp. 284, 285-6.
[83] Ibid, pp. 284, 285-6.

anti-Catholicism can be seen as part of wider pattern of comparison and distinction that identified any number of groups as "other" in early modern society.

The challenge of Lake and Collins's analyses to the view that anti-Catholicism was a product of early modern irrationality beyond explanation, are crucial in developing a more nuanced understanding of its role in forming religious and national identities. However, neither historian has been able to engage fully with the concept of prejudice. Lake does not explicitly state his definition of a prejudice as opposed to ideology, and I would suggest that the notion that anti-Catholicism was not a prejudice and that prejudices are fundamentally irrational and cannot be analysed, reflects a misunderstanding of their nature. Furthermore, its status as a prejudice, the far reaching effect upon the experiences and views of the Catholic population cannot be considered fully.

The extensive research into prejudice that has been conducted by social psychologists since the 1930s has suggested the degree to which prejudice and stereotyping are fundamental parts of human social interaction. The degree to which prejudice can become institutionalised within societies has also been extensively explored. In his seminal analysis of prejudice, Allport posited that it is an example of an extreme attitude that is maintained through a variety of causal factors including cultural values, individual personality traits and social acceptability.[84] A recurring point in Lake's analysis is that the designation of anti-Catholicism as a 'mere prejudice', which places it within the realms of the irrational and, therefore, prevents the imposition of 'a historicized, ideological and a narrativized, political, analysis'.[85] Lake appears to accept the notion that a prejudice is by definition irrational, a view

[84] G. W. Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice* (1954, Addison-Wesley Publication Co., Cambridge) *passim*.
[85] Lake, "Anti-puritanism", p. 82.

that has long been shown to misrepresent the nature of prejudice and its relationship with inter-group conflict. Despite the negative effect that prejudice and stereotyping has upon societies and intergroup conflict, research has suggested that notions of irrationality explain little about these aspects of psychology and are inaccurate. Far from being irrational, prejudice has increasingly been seen as a common part of human social relations, often resulting from competition for scarce resources.[86] Even the tendency to generalise and stereotype appears to be a common part of human cognitive processes that allow social information to be processed.

Consideration of anti-Catholicism as a prejudice does not exclude recognition of the system of binary opposites that Lake identifies as key to Protestant views of the Roman Church and its followers. The creation of a negative mirror image of Protestantism in the anti-popish image of Catholicism could be seen as part of the wider observed pattern that hostile intergroup relations can lead to comparisons that favour the in-group.[87] In societies where a group or groups are subordinated and their access to resources limited because of their perceived membership of that group, negative social identity and stereotyping can be used to legitimise the position of the dominant group.[88]

The stereotypical, negative images that were created of Catholics were part of a wider pattern of prejudice and discrimination in early modern society. Women, ethnic minorities, non-Anglican religious groups and homosexuals were also subject to persecution, discrimination and denigration. The creation of stereotypes that offered mirrored, opposite images of the dominant group were also evident in these prejudices, perhaps most clearly in misogynistic characterisations of women. The 'one-sex' view

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[86] Sherif et al, *The Robber's Cave Experiments*.
[87] Tajfel and Turner, "The social identity theory of intergroup behaviour", p. 16.
[88] R. M. Quist and M. G. Resendez, "Social dominance threat: Examining social dominance theory's explanation of prejudice as legitimizing myths", *BASP*, 24, 4, 2002, p. 287.

of biological and gender differences between men and women dominated medical, religious and cultural attitudes towards both genders, and depicted the sexes as mirror images of each other. It allowed the equation of negative attributes to femaleness that in turn reflected positively on males. Perceptions of female licentiousness and lack of self-control were in direct contrast to the ideals of adult masculinity that were enshrined within early modern culture.[89] Interestingly, such prejudices sometimes became interconnected. It has been suggested that increasing depiction of male homosexuals as effeminate during the long eighteenth century was a product of an increasing emphasis upon the differences between the sexes.[90] The inter-connectedness was also evident in anti-Catholicism. Sexual deviancy was associated with Catholic nuns, monks and priests in erotic and anti-Catholic literature.[91] Furthermore, the allegation that Catholicism was particularly attractive to women reflected the belief that it was primarily a religion based on superficial fashions and trinkets, all stereotypically the concern of women.[92]

Such accusations provided opportunities to attack specific religious practices that remained crucial parts of Catholic religious life. The sacrament of penance and the issuing of indulgences were seen as providing Catholics with a license for evermore sinful behaviour. Similarly, the presence of priests within the household and their access to their patrons' private quarters were seen as opportunities for sexual exploitation.[93] The most lurid of anti-Catholic fantasies linked Catholics to other

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[89] K. Harvey, "The Century of Sex? Gender, Bodies, and Sexuality in the Long Eighteenth", *HJ*, 45, 4, 2002, pp. 900-901.
[90] R. Trumbach, "Sex, gender, and sexual identity in modern culture: Male sodomy and female prostitution in enlightenment London", *JHS*, 2, 2, 1991, pp. 192-4.
[91] F. E. Dolan, "Gender and the "lost" spaces of Catholicism", *JIH*, 32, 4, 2002, p. 653; Idem, "Why are nuns funny?", *HLQ*, 70, 4, 2007, pp. 511.
[92] Idem, *Whores of Babylon: Catholicism, Gender, and Seventeenth-Century Print Culture* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1999), pp.
[93] Idem, "Gender and the 'lost' spaces of Catholicism", p. 653.

politically expedient bogeymen, including, rather nonsensically, extreme Puritans, and Jews who remained targets enmity despite their physical removal from England.[94]

The impact of prejudice on the Catholic community has been given little explicit consideration in examinations of Catholic identity. However, the active persecution of Catholics, and the rhetoric that accompanied it, did impact significantly on the way that many Catholics shaped and expressed their identity. The fact that anti-Catholicism was institutionalised within the laws of the state meant that discrimination did not rely on individual prejudice, but had become part of accepted social practice. The social acceptability and ubiquity of anti-Catholicism meant that very few Catholics could avoid its effects. Even the wealthiest Catholics found themselves excluded from the political activities that were the preserve of the social elite. In Wales, the earls of Powis were amongst the wealthiest families in the region. However, William Herbert, the first earl, was unable to play any political role in Charles II's reign due to his Catholicism, and only found his position relieved when he received a dispensation from the Test Acts in March 1686.[95]

The effect of anti-Catholicism was perhaps most obviously manifest in the patterns of conformity and recusancy that the community created in order to deal with their exclusion from public life and the fines incurred by failure to attend Anglican service. For some Welsh Catholics these different lifestyles became a prominent part of family life. In Monmouthshire, some middling and gentry families instituted a system that allowed the womenfolk and children to live as recusants.[96] The men of

[94] Collins, "Restoration Anti-Catholicism", p. 301.
[95] V. Stater, "Herbert, William, styled first marquess of Powis and Jacobite first duke of Powis (*c.*1626–1696)", *ODNB*, 2004, accessed http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/13060, 13th March 2012.
[96] Both the Lewis and Milborne families appear to have instituted this system. Trevor, *An Abstract Of Several Examinations*, pp. 6-7; Herbert Croft, *A Short Narrative Of the Discovery of a College of Jesuits, At a Place called the Come In the County of Hereford* (London, 1679), p. 10.

such families publicly conformed, often returning to recusancy following their retirement from public life.[97] Deliberately instituted to circumvent the legal requirements for attendance of public service, this kind of gender based differentiation of religious practice is a clear demonstration of the way in which the experience of prejudice compelled the community to shape its culture and identity to suit their different social status. The need to conform as a means of maintaining their Catholicism privately and avoiding the strictures imposed by the state, led to the development of alternative means of religious expression in the 1600s. By the later decades of the century, such practices had been established for many generations.[98]

Significantly, the patterns of recusancy and conformity that emerged in the aftermath of the Reformation, are revealing not just of Catholics relations with Protestants and the State, but also the differences within the group. Differences of wealth and social status, geography and local politics all effected the ways in which Catholics constructed and expressed their religious identity. For the wealthiest aristocratic families, recusancy was far more realistic than those from lower down the social scale. They were able to maintain priests within their homes and in local mission centres, and resist attempts by the state to force them to conform. The earls of Powis were a clear example of one of these recusant families. While prevented from participating in politics, they were able to use their considerable influence to protect themselves and their priests from attempts to persecute them or enforce conformity. The Herberts maintained their recusancy into the eighteenth century, enduring exile with the Jacobean court.[99]

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[97] Trevor, *An Abstract Of Several Examinations*, pp. 6-7; Croft, *A Short Narrative Of the Discovery of a College of Jesuits*, p. 10.
[98] For details of the generational pattern of conformity in some Monmouthshire families see Appendices D and I.
[99] Stater, "Herbert, William", *ODNB*.

However, not all Catholics were able to operate in this fashion, and no Catholic was able to maintain total social isolation from the Anglican community that surrounded them. The inability of Catholics to segregate themselves from Anglicans was acknowledged in *A Short Rule of Good Life*. Despite his often stringent approach to maintaining religious observance and moral probity, Southwell did acknowledge the reality that Catholics might have to mix with neighbours that were not as religiously observant or held different beliefs.[100] However, Southwell did not see this kind of necessary social mixing as an impediment to the maintenance of a Catholic identity. Instead he emphasised the opportunity it afforded for careful consideration of conduct and the presentation of the moral and religious ideal that he advocated – moral uprightness, modesty, fortitude and humility.[101]

Such advice was perhaps even more pertinent in the late seventeenth century as Protestantism, both Anglican and more radical, were increasingly becoming the dominant religious culture, even in areas that had previously been markedly conservative in religion.[102] Even in areas like Wales where Catholicism had endured far longer, Anglicanism and Dissenting Protestantism had displaced older religious loyalties. In the remaining Catholic strongholds along the March, those who remained devoted to Rome may have found themselves more numerous than in other areas, but were still forced to maintain relations with their Protestant neighbours and relations.

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[100] Southwell, *A Short Rule of good lyfe*, pp. 51-59.
[101] Ibid.
[102] J. E. C. Hill, "Puritans and 'the dark corners of the land'", *TRHS*, 13, 1963, pp. 81-4. The emergence of Quaker and Baptist communities in South and Mid Wales was also marked and lead to significant tensions in some regions. Anon., *An Alarum to Corporations: Or, the Giddy sort of Hereticks Designs, unmask* (London, 1659), *passim*; Anon., *For the King and both Houses of Parliament. Being a short Declaration of the cruelty inflicted upon some of the servants of the Lord now called Quakers, by some barbarous and bloudy men Inhabitants in Merionythshire* (1660), *passim*; Thomas Godwyn, *Phanatical-Tenderness, Or The Charity Of The Non-Conformists* (London, 1684), pp. 21-35.

However despite the necessity of at least partial co-operation, in both North and South Wales, the instances of relative accord were interspersed with periods of active hostility. This would suggest that contact between Catholics and Protestants did not reduce the ability of the Catholic community to maintain its distinct identity and use it protectively in times of need. Most interestingly, it would seem that Catholic/Protestant relations in this region varied considerably, not just between individuals, but over time. Those who would emerge as the most rabid anti-papists in the late 1670s were reported to have maintained friendly relations with Jesuit missionaries in previous decades, one even being rumoured to have allowed Catholics to utilise the rooms he rented at a local inn.[103]

However, other Catholics at various times were unable to maintain this peaceful co-existence and used their interactions with their neighbours as opportunities to express their Catholic identity in and aggressive and provocative fashion. When confronted by parishioners in the parish Gwendwr where he controlled the living, Bodnam Gunter refused to give in to their demands for an adequate Anglican minister. Angered by Gunter's selection of a cantankerous and inept minister, the people of the village confronted Gunter on his poor choice. Gunter's response was far from tactful, saying that they would have the minister and that one of his bulls 'was fit enough for them'.[104] The fact that Gunter was a well-known Catholic, added an extra tension to this fraught local conflict, raising suspicions in the local populace of his true reasons for choosing such an unsuitable minister. His aggressive assertion that he need pay

[103] John Arnold and Charles Price, despite their hounding of several priests across the Monmouthshire countryside, were described by St David Lewis as having been 'my very good friends and acquaintances' until they arrested him. Warner noted the rumour that Arnold had provided a chapel for Catholics. St David Lewis, *A Narrative of the Imprisonment and Tryal of Mr David Lewis, Priest of the Society of Jesus* (London, 1679), p. 1; John Warner, *The History of the English Persecution of Catholics and the Presbyterian Plot*, edited by T. A. Birrell, 1953, p. 299.
[104] NLW MS, Church in Wales, Diocese of St Davids Episcopal 11, 1186.

no heed to his neighbours' religious proclivities, while observing his own faith suggested that Bodnam Gunter was far from discrete in exhibiting his religious identity.

Similar patterns of co-operation and discord can be seen in North Wales, and again, these interactions between Catholics and Protestants did appear to alter the complex Catholic identity that had formed in these communities. While the Catholic mission at Holywell did not suffer the same level of anti-popish fervour that befell the mission in the south, it had been subject to destruction with the arrival of Parliamentarian troops in the Civil War.[105] Furthermore, after a period of unprecedented Catholic power in the town and royal patronage of the shrine by James II, relations between Catholics and Protestants failed dramatically. The 1688 Revolution sparked local Anglicans to invade the Jesuit headquarters at the Star Inn and the holy shrine, destroying the library and burning crucifixes in the marketplace.[106] Importantly, the tempestuous interactions between Catholics and Protestants that marked the history of the shrine did little to quell the existence of a significant Catholic presence in the town and continued resort to the shrine by pilgrims.[107]

Beyond the spectrum of conformity and recusancy that Catholics instituted in response to anti-Catholic legislation, the experience of this kind of prejudice also created an image of their religion against which Catholics formed their own identity. One way in which this reaction was manifest was in the direct comparisons drawn by Catholic writers between their definition of Catholicism and that portrayed in anti-Catholic tracts. Propagandist diatribes of Anglicanism and Catholicism had been traded between theologians and polemicists since the split with Rome in the 1540s,

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[105] Walsham, "Holywell", pp. 229-30.
[106] Seguin, "Cures and Controversy in Early Modern Wales", p. 16.
[107] LRO, Lancashire County Quarter Sessions, MS QSP594/16; details of modern-day pilgrimage can be found at http://www.saintwinefrideswell.com/cardinal_pilgrimage.htm.

and the image of Catholics that had come to permeate English and Welsh culture had been refined into a distinct rhetoric of prejudice. Examples of Catholic political extremism under the Elizabethan and Jacobean governments were seen as further evidence of the treachery of the Pope and those who followed him, even when such associations were inaccurate.[108] It was against this depiction as politically untrustworthy, religiously deluded and satanically allied, that Catholic writers sought to establish their own positive religious identity.[109]

The imposition of a negative identity associated with membership of the subordinate group has emerged as a feature of many societies riddled by intergroup conflict. While extensive social psychological research has been conducted that indicates the effect of prejudice for those individuals and groups that express it, it also has a significant impact on those that are on the receiving end of such negative images. Tajfel and Turner proposed a number of different strategies could be used by members of the subordinate group in order to address the negative social identity that was ascribed to them by those that dominated their society.[110] The deployment of these individual- and collective-based strategies reflects differences in social opportunities, the basis of the prejudice and group cohesion. Individual strategies involved a member of the subordinate group attempting to raise their social position without raising the position of their community as a whole. Tajfel and Turner described these strategies as *individual mobility* and *assimilation.* However, these responses can only be

[108] Wiener, "The beleaguered isle", pp. 31-35.
[109] Collins, "Restoration Anti-Catholicism", pp. 285-9.
[110] Tajfel and Turner, "The social identity theory of intergroup behaviour"; D. M. Taylor, F. M. Moghaddam, I. Gamble and E. Zellerer, "Disadvantaged Group Responses to Perceived Inequality: From Passive Acceptance to Collective Action", *J SP*, 127, 3, 1987, *passim*; *M.* Blanz, A. L. Mummendey, R. Mielke and A. Klink, "Responding to negative social identity: a taxonomy of identity management strategies", *EJSP*, 28, 1998, pp. 698-702;

achieved in societies where significant permeability exists between social groups.[111] In early modern Wales, the decision to convert to Anglicanism was the most straightforward means by which Catholics could end their persecution and was actively encouraged by the State and Anglican Church. Outward conformity could be seen as an attempt to temporarily move from the subordinate Catholic group to the dominant Anglican one. Even if this change did not alter the individual's personal convictions, it did allow them publicly to claim membership of the Anglican Church and avoid the stigmatisation and persecution associated with their internalised social identity. However, the contemporary rhetoric of a singular path to salvation through God's true Church did not make conformity or conversion possible for all. It presented individuals with profound spiritual problems.[112] Some Catholics even reacted physically to the disturbance of attending Anglican services.[113]

Decisions about whether to conform fully or just outwardly were further complicated by the fact that some high-ranking church papists could use the positions that they gained to protect those members of the community that remained recusants, as well as the missionaries that served them. These kinds of actions fall into the category of collective-based responses to prejudice that were also described by Tajfel and Turner.[114] Other collective responses have also been identified in subsequent research.[115] In the context of early modern Catholicism, the most prevalent collective reaction seems to have been an attempt to challenge the main assumptions about the nature of the Roman Church and the beliefs and doctrine that it espoused. Tajfel and

[111] Tajfel and Turner, "The social identity theory of intergroup behaviour"; Blanz et al, "Responding to negative social identity", pp. 698-702.
[112] M. C. Questier, *Conversion, Politics, and Religion in England, 1580-1625* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996) pp. 40-75.
[113] Walsham, *Church Papists*, pp. 73-5.
[114] Tajfel and Turner, "The social identity theory of intergroup behaviour", p.
[115] Blanz et al, "Responding to negative social identity", pp. 698-9.

Turner identified such a strategy and suggested that its aim was in 'changing the values assigned to the group's attributes, so that comparisons which were previously negative are now perceived as positive'.[116]

This strategy can clearly be seen in the arguments of Catholic authors in the later seventeenth century, as the notion of tolerating Catholicism again became a contentious issue following the Restoration. Catholic writers sought to challenge their anti-popish image as political and religious bogeyman, and set about the task in a number of different ways. The anonymous author of *Reasons Why Roman Catholicks Should not be persecuted* sought to attack the Anglican justifications for the continued exclusion of Catholics from public life.[117] The argument that the Catholic Church presented a real and palpable threat to the security of the English state was rejected by the author. Instead the author asserted that the Anglican Church, like its Catholic counterpart, was a body of Christians, required to adhere to the basic tenet of 'not to doe to others what they would not have done to themselves'.[118] Similarly, the differences between the two churches were downplayed as 'differences more in Animosity and words, than real substantial Points'.[119] The author suggested that the realities of Protestant faith have led it to follow the Catholic example of utilising the teachings of the Church Fathers to justify their interpretations of Christianity. Subsequent condemnation of Catholics as failing to adhere to the Scriptures seemed markedly hypocritical. According to the author, it was the mistreatment of Catholics by Protestants that placed those loyal to Rome in situations where they were exposed to greater foreign influence and in danger of disloyalty. The sending of Catholic children abroad for their schooling because of the lack of Catholic education at home

[116] Tajfel and Turner, "The social identity theory of intergroup behaviour", p. 20.
[117] Anon., *Reasons Why Roman-Catholicks Should not be persecuted* (London, 1663), *passim*
[118] Ibid, p. 1.
[119] Ibid, p. 2.

meant that children were being exposed to ideas that could 'corrupt the hopes of whole Families'.[120]

A far more direct challenge to anti-popish views of Catholicism and assertion of Catholic identity can be found in *The Catholick Mirrour*.[121] In this anonymous text, each chapter is focused on a key aspect of Catholic doctrine proved 'against the Opinion of Protestants'.[122] The arguments put forward by the author of this work could be seen as establishing another system of binary opposites that depict the Protestant Churches as misleading the people, while the Catholic Church relied on the authority of the Church Fathers as well as the Scriptures in establishing the "truth" of Christian teaching. Rejecting Protestant claims that Catholic doctrine and practice were based on the teachings of the Pope rather than Scripture, the author asserted that belief in the efficacy of all seven sacraments and concepts like Purgatory was justified by the Bible.[123] The author concluded by asserting that Catholics as a community are marked by their cohesion and agreement, in contrast to the schisms that plagued the Protestant cause.[124] While the assertion that the Catholic community were united in the mid-seventeenth century was not representative of the various divisions between seculars, Jesuits, Blackloists and conservatives, this assertion is important in suggesting how some Catholics wished to see themselves. It illustrates the way in which Catholics were seeking to express a positive social identity in contrast to the negative image that proliferated in anti-popish literature and justified laws that discriminated against them.

As the reign of Charles II continued, concern over the influence and intentions of religious minorities within the country shifted focus from lingering animosity

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[120] Ibid, pp. 3, 6.
[121] Anon., *The Catholick Mirrour. Or a looking-glasse for Protestants* (Paris, 1662).
[122] Ibid, p. 11.
[123] Ibid, pp. 1-25.
[124] Ibid, pp. 137-42.

towards Dissenters who were blamed for the Civil Wars towards the traditional target of enmity – Catholics. In Wales, following the return to power of the Henry Somerset, marquess of Worcester, Catholics and church papists had been promoted to positions of influence on the Bench in South Wales, while in Mid Wales, William Herbert had succeeded to his father's title and had been created earl of Powis. While it could not be argued that Catholics maintained a strong presence in the politics of the region, Wales was not immune from the changing patterns of sectarian tension that was developing across the country. More importantly, members of the anti-Worcester Anglican faction were not immune to the political power of their long-standing complaints about the "dangers" of Catholic political advancement and apparent infiltration of the county militia, in such a charged atmosphere.[125] As sectarian tensions shifted, there was still a clear need for Catholic writers to challenge the negative image of Catholicism as politically dangerous and devoted to beliefs that were fundamentally unreasonable.

One of those Catholic authors that did attempt to challenge these views was Edward Worsley (1605-76). Born in Lancashire, a region containing a large Catholic community, Worsley took orders as a Jesuit in 1626. Worsley held positions at both Liege and the professed house at Antwerp, but he also served as a missionary in London. During his career he was reported to have won a significant reputation for sophistication and talent. In *Reason and Religion. Or The Certain Rule Of Faith* (1672), Worsley asserted that 'the prudent search for Religion is ever made and first

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[125] *LJ*, "10 March 1671", 12, 1666-1675, 1767-1830, pp. 449-452, http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=12767&strquery=449 Date accessed, 18th January 2012; Idem, "5th December 1678", 13, 1675-1681, 1767-1830, pp. 402-404, accessed at http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=11620&strquery=monmouthshire, 18th January 2012; Ibid, "27th October 1680", pp. 674-676, accessed at http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=11620&strquery=monmouthshire, 18th January 2012; *CJ*, "29th April 1678", 9, 1667-1687, 1802, pp. 464-471, accessed at http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=27610&strquery=466, 18th January 2012; Anon., *A Letter From a Gentleman In Glocestershire To a Friend In London* (London, 1678).

begun with Reason, or a rational Discourse'.[126] However, he asserted that in their search for true faith, Christians should not simply rely on reason, but also accept the revelation of God's power as manifest through supernatural events as well as through the Scriptures. Furthermore, Worsley denounced Protestant rejection of contemporary and saintly miracles, instead arguing that the rejection of these miracles on the grounds that they are unreasonable also infers the rejection of those miracles performed by Christ.[127] Ultimately this assertion of the compatibility of Catholic belief with reason was an attack on the suggestion that Catholicism was superstitious, and that the Church relied on the ignorance of the people to maintain its control. Such pronouncements sought to emphasise Catholic identity as reasonable, ordered and cohesive, even if such views did not represent the reality of Catholic life in the 1660s and 1670s.

For Catholics living in Wales the place of the supernatural within their religious identity was still evident even into the late seventeenth century. Rather than dismissing the miracles witnessed at the holy shrines of the Principality, missionaries instead thought to use them to promote their own Counter-Reformation propaganda. In a world where the supernatural was undoubtedly present for both Protestants and Catholics, a belief in the interference of God on temporal affairs could plausibly be seen as compatible with logic by some.[128] For Welsh Catholics, still observing the millennia old traditions of well veneration, the notion that belief in the miraculous could be seen as a distinctive element of their Catholic identity, must have been easy to fit within the pre-existing format of their religious culture.

The impact of anti-Catholicism on the formation of post-Reformation Catholic identity should not be seen as acting only in the realm of books and manuscripts. For

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[126] Edward Worsley, *Reason and Religion. Or The Certain Rule Of Faith* (Antwerp, 1672), sig. A2.
[127] Ibid, pp.
[128] A. Walsham, "The Reformation and 'the Disenchantment of the World' Reassessed", *HJ*, 51, 2, 2008, p. 500.

some Welsh Catholics, anti-Catholicism could become a very real and challenging element within their everyday lives. As has been suggested previously, the late 1670s was a period when anti-Catholicism became particularly pronounced and problematic in South Wales. This was a significant time of transition for the community in Glamorgan and the Marcher counties, as Catholics amongst the political classes began to act in a more cohesive fashion. Surprisingly, during the Civil War the large Catholic community in Monmouthshire had not followed the expected pattern and universally followed the Catholic marquess of Worcester in his support of the king. The influence over the Royalist cause in the region by the Somerset family did undoubtedly cause tension and discord, as some Protestant gentry refused to fight under Catholic commanders.[129]

However, the fear that the numerous Catholics of Monmouthshire would show no such compunction, or find themselves drawn into the fight through their seigneurial bonds to the Somersets, did not occur. In his examination of Catholic allegiances during the First Civil War, Matthews has challenged the long-held assumption that Welsh Catholics were particularly strong in their support of the Royalist cause. He points to the fact that only twenty two of the eighty Catholic gentry in Monmouthshire appear to have actively supported the Royalist forces. Six of these twenty two appealed against their conviction for delinquency to the Committee of Compounding, and two appeals were successful.[130] This evidence has interesting implications for the question of how Catholic identity developed during the Civil War and in the decades

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[129] Edward Somerset, then Lord Herbert, proved particularly controversial as a military leader. Sir Thomas Morgan of Machen refused to serve under him on religious grounds. His attempts to raise a Catholic army in Ireland in 1644 earned him lasting mistrust amongst Monmouthshire Protestants. Jeremy K. Knight, "'From the Welsh Good Lord Deliver Me': soldiers, papists and civilians in Civil War Monmouthshire", *AC*, 151, 2002, p. 4; P. Jenkins, "Anti-popery on the Welsh Marches", *HJ*, 23, 2, 1980, p. 280; S. K. Roberts, 'Somerset, Edward, second marquess of Worcester (*d.* 1667)', *ODNB*, accessed at http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/26006?docPos=2, 11th March 2012.

[130] R. Matthews, "To a man for the King": The Allegiance of Welsh Catholics during the First Civil War, 1642-46", *PHCC*, 20/21, 2000/2001, pp. 88, 90.

that followed. As Matthews points out, three of those Catholics convicted of delinquency in Monmouthshire were drawn from the Somerset family, making the suggestion of a widespread Catholic involvement in the royal cause seem unlikely.[131] Matthews goes so far as to suggest that the expectation that the Catholic gentry would fall into line behind the prominent Somersets failed to materialise. Among those Catholics that did not actively support the king were some of the most prominent Catholic gentlemen in South Wales if not the Principality, as well as lesser members of the community – Sir Edward Morgan of Llantarnum, Richard Vaughan of Courtfield, John Powell of Rockfield and Thomas Gunter of Abergavenny. Matthews asserts that 'there appears to be no evidence of economic or seigneurial influence on the part of the house of Somerset determinative of Catholic political allegiance'.[132] This failure of Catholics to unify into a cohesive political group during the crisis of the Civil Wars is important given that far greater political cohesiveness appeared in subsequent decades. The question must then be raised – if seigneurial bonds failed to inspire unity in the 1640s, what created cohesion in the 1660s and 1670s?

Following the death of Henry, first marquess of Worcester, the dominance of the Somerset family in Monmouthshire was significantly curtailed. Edward, the second marquess, succeeded his father in 1646, but was forced into exile. His situation did not improve on his return to England in 1652, when he was imprisoned in the Tower. Following his release, his time was consumed with his scientific endeavours and, with the return of the monarch in 1660, he attempted to gain some financial recompense from the Crown for the enormous sums that had been laid out by the family to support the Royalist cause. However, the restoration of the family's political position in Wales

[131] Ibid, p. 94.
[132] Ibid, p. 95.

and the South West fell to his son, Henry. In 1660, Henry was selected as knight of the shire in Monmouthshire. After his succession to the title in 1667 as third marquess, he came to occupy positions as lord lieutenant of Monmouthshire, Herefordshire and Gloucestershire, posts that the Somersets had controlled at various times since the Act of Union. His conversion to Anglicanism upon his marriage to Mary Beauchamp in 1657, made the return of the Somersets as a significant political force in South Wales initially acceptable to the gentry of the region.[133] However, in the late 1660s, acceptance of the Somersets' political power had radical consequences for the Catholic gentry.

In the absence of the Somersets as a political force in eastern Wales, the Protestant elite had become much more dominant than was typical. While these gentlemen initially accepted the political ambitions of Henry Somerset, such acquiescence was short-lived. The Somerset candidate was rejected in the Monmouth elections of 1667.[134] Seeking to influence the election, the new marquess of Worcester used the garrison that he controlled at Chepstow, having them march through Monmouth, while also challenging the election result through petition. However, the election was decided in favour of Sir Trevor Williams, an ardent anti-Catholic who had featured prominently in leading the Welsh gentry to turn against the first marquess and support Parliament in the war. He joined with those gentry opposed to the interests of the Somersets.[135] Increasingly this period saw the politics of Glamorgan and Monmouthshire, and the neighbouring English county of Herefordshire, being split

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[133] S. K. Roberts, "Somerset, Edward, second marquess of Worcester (*d.* 1667)", *ODNB*, accessed at http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/26006?docPos=2, 11th March 2012; M. McClain, "Somerset, Henry, first duke of Beaufort (1629–1700)", *ODNB*, accessed at http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/26009, 12th March 2012; Idem, *Beaufort: The Duke and his Duchess 1657-1715* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2001) pp. 11-23, 32, 38-40.
[134] McClain, *Beaufort*, pp. 80-81.
[135] Idem, 'Williams, Sir Trevor, baronet (c.1623–1692)', *ODNB*, 2004, accessed at http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/66555, on 19 Sept 2013.

along these fractious political lines. However, these divisions also had a distinctly sectarian flavour in this area of Wales. The role that the first and second marquesses had played in promoting Catholicism in South Wales and the Marches made several members of the Protestant community suspicious of the sincerity of Henry Somerset's conversion. Furthermore, the family still maintained close connections with a number of Catholic kin groups in the region.[136]

It was in this tense political climate that Worcester began to remove his political Anglican opponents from the Commission of the Peace and the Deputy Lieutenancy.[137] His motives for such a provocative act were not religious, but rather political and financial. McClain has pointed to revenge as the motive behind this provocative act, and may have been the product of his anger at being politically defeated in a region that his family had traditionally controlled.[138] However, despite the fact that Henry Somerset may have manipulated the Bench to suit his personal or political interests, in a community with a significant Catholic population and a history of religious disputes, these political machinations quickly turned sectarian. More political enemies were removed from their positions as magistrates in April 1678. The removal of John Arnold of Llanvihangel Crucorney and John Scudamore of Kentchurch, Herefordshire, has been widely seen as the result of the deterioration in relations between Worcester and Monmouthshire gentry over the exploitation of the timber at Wentwood Chase in the north of the county.[139] However, the replacement of these often virulently anti-

[136] For details of the connections please see Appendix G.
[137] Nathan Rogers, *Memories of Monmouthshire*, edited by I. Waters (Chepstow, Moss Rose, 1978 (1708)), pp. 87-119.
[138] M. McClain, "Wentwood Forest riot: property rights and political culture in Restoration England", in S. D. Amussen and M. A. Kishlansky (eds), *Political Culture and Cultural Politics in Early Modern Europe. Essays Presented to David Underdown*, (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1995) p. 120.
[139] The vitriol of those members of the Protestant gentry that contested Worcester's actions in Wentwood, some of whom were imprisoned for their opposition, remained clear even as late as 1708. Nathan Rogers of Llanvaches produced a polemic of his views and experiences of the struggle

Catholic gentlemen with men drawn from the traditional Catholic client families that had long acted as the Somerset's allies, inflamed this volatile situation. To many these actions seemed to suggest that the third marquess was returning to the practices of his grandfather in protecting Catholic interests, even this time awarding Catholics and church papists positions of political and social influence.[140] Amongst the men promoted to the Bench were such controversial figures as Sir Edward Morgan of Llantarnum, a relative and ally to the Somersets in the creation of the Jesuit mission at the Cwm, and William Jones of Llanarth, who allowed his sons to be educated at Continental Catholic colleges.[141] These men served as JPs and deputy lieutenants, official positions that should have required them to swear the Oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy, for many years.[142] A target of particular contempt was the steward of the Somersets' Monmouthshire estate, Henry Milborne, whose family were known Catholics, who was made JP in 1678.[143]

It could be argued that these complex dealings reflect nothing more than the economic and political machinations that were part of Henry Somerset's attempts to re-assert his family's dominance after over a decade of absence from Welsh politics.

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between Worcester and his enemies in 1708. Rogers, *Memories of Monmouthshire*; McClain, "Wentwood Forest riot", *passim*.

[140] Trevor, *An Abstract Of Several Examinations*, p. 12-20.

[141] For details of the familial connection between the Morgans of Llantarnam and the Somersets see the partial family tree in Appendix G.

[142] William Jones was reported to have served the county for ten years, despite the fact that it was known to MPs that he was Catholic.

[143] Ibid, pp. 17-8; Croft, *A Short Narrative Of the Discovery of a College of Jesuits*, p. 10. Milborne and others were defended against the charges that they were themselves Catholic and had supported local Catholics in an anonymous pamphlet that published correspondence between the men and the marquess of Worcester. However, even in their defence the men were forced to acknowledge their Catholic familial connections. The fact that they and others were found to have acted to defend Catholics by the Lords and Commons would suggest that the accusations levelled against Milborne and others were not simply the product of Arnold's and Scudamore's anti-Catholic vitriol. Anon., *A Letter From a Gentleman In Glocestershire To a Friend, passim*; *CJ*, "29th April 1678", 9, 1667-1687, 1802, p. 6, accessed at http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=27010&strquery=monmouthshire 18th January 2012; *LJ*, "27th October – 22nd November 1680", 13, 1675-1681, 1767-1830, pp. 674-676, accessed at http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=11737&strquery=monmouthshire 18th January 2012.

McClain has argued that the declarations of Sir Trevor Williams and John Arnold that they had been turned out of the Commission because of their Protestantism were attempts to 'deliberately confuse the political dispute in Monmouthshire'.[144] However, it would seem that Arnold and the anti-papists that supported him cannot simply be dismissed as extremists seeking to impose their religious prejudices on an essentially political struggle. In 1708, Nathan Rogers depicted the struggle between Worcester and the Protestant gentry that opposed him, as being fundamentally linked with the sectarian divisions in the region. He asserted that the troubles in Wentwood were part of a larger problem in the country generally that arose when Catholics came to occupy positions of influence.[145] Given his membership of the anti-Worcester faction, such suggestions could be seen as the bitterness of a man still nursing his anger thirty years after the dispute had ended. However, his views do reflect the underlying point that anti-Catholicism could not be disassociated from political disputes in this era.

As had been noted over seventy years earlier, the Protestants and Catholics of Monmouthshire showed a propensity for sectarianism, while the increased concern over the influence of Catholicism in the later 1670s marked a resurgence of anti-Catholicism as a political discourse in English and Welsh culture.[146] While the economic aspect of this dispute had raged for some time, it would seem that even from the mid-1670s, the toleration of Catholicism by JPs and magistrates allied to the marquess of Worcester had become a feature of life in the region. In 1675 over £100 was charged against the lands held by recusants in Monmouthshire, less than a quarter of the amount levied in Herefordshire. However, by April 1678, only three shillings, four pence had been passed to the Exchequer. In 1677 the sheriff of Monmouthshire

[144] McClain, *Beaufort*, p. 129.
[145] Rogers, *Memories of Monmouthshire*, p. 71.
[146] Jeremy K. Knight, "'From the Welsh good lord deliver me': soldiers, papists and civilians in Civil War Monmouthshire", *AC*, 151, 2002, p. 3.

was charged with the collection of nine seizures of recusant estates amounting to £40. However, only 5 were collected, all of whom it were found to be Dissenters and not Catholics. The poor conviction rate and low levels of collection on fines was perhaps unsurprising when it is considered that the county sheriff at that time was Rowland Pritchard, a well-known Catholic.[147]

On 29th April 1678, the Commons declared that there was evidence of the 'great Boldness' of Catholics in some counties.[148] When presented with evidence from Monmouthshire and other areas, the House determined that some Catholics had evaded legal penalties through 'the great Remissness and Connivency of his Majesty's Officers and Ministers of Justice, both Civil and Ecclesiastical'.[149] One clear example of such connivance was found in the actions of Henry Milborne. Milborne was related to the Somersets and acted as a key ally in the ongoing political and economic disputes with the anti-Worcester gentry. However, in conjunction with other officials known or suspected to be Catholic, he protected members of the community, including his own sisters. It was this protection of Catholic interests and the mission at the Cwm that created further animosity between those that had been excluded and those that had been promoted to the Bench by Worcester.[150]

The emergence of a significant Catholic presence amongst the government officials in Monmouthshire should not be interpreted as a grand conspiracy by the Catholic gentry and Worcester to protect and further the interests of the community as a whole. Such a notion would suggest a degree of premeditation and concerted

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[147] *CJ*, "29th April 1678", p. 6, accessed at http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=27010&strquery=monmouthshire 18th January 2012; Trevor, *An Abstract Of Several Examinations*, p. 17.
[148] *CJ*, "29th April 1678", p. 6, accessed at http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=27010&strquery=monmouthshire 18th January 2012.
[149] Ibid
[150] For details of this familial connection between the Somersets and the Milbornes see the family tree in Appendix D. Trevor, *An Abstract Of Several Examinations*, pp. 17-19; Croft, *A Short Narrative Of the Discovery of a College of Jesuits*, p. 10.

planning between the Catholic gentry and Henry Somerset for which there is no clear evidence. No letters or records of communication exist that document these kinds of arrangements. In the face of such a clear lack of evidence for conspiracy, it would seem likely that the accusations that Henry Somerset, in league with the county's Catholics, was trying to take over Monmouthshire by vote-rigging and military might were simply that – accusations. The fact that they were proposed by the likes of John Arnold and Sir Trevor Williams, both known for their anti-Catholicism, lends credence to the view that these allegations were more the product of their fear or political opportunism than reality.

However, neither should these appointments to the Monmouthshire Bench be seen as happy coincidence. Undoubtedly, Henry Somerset's intentions in placing members of Catholic families in these strategic positions was to support his position in his increasingly serious dispute with those opposed to his activities in Wentwood and his power in the region as a whole.[151] The Catholic and church papist gentlemen who took up these roles, must have seen the opportunity it presented to protect their co-religionists and family members from anti-Catholic penalties.

This move towards a more unified response to the threat anti-Catholicism represented, was a marked contrast to that which had occurred a generation earlier. Such actions can be seen as evidence of a significant change in the way in which members of the community identified themselves within their wider social environment. If Monmouthshire Catholics had not created a cohesive and effective social identity that recognised the fundamental similarity of their religious views as opposed to those of their Protestant neighbours, then such collective action would have not been possible. In the 1640s, the Catholic gentry of Monmouthshire had not co-

[151] McClain, *Beaufort*, pp.106-110.

operated and failed to commit themselves in large numbers to supporting the royalist cause promoted by their protector, the first marquess of Worcester.[152] The question remains as to why this change in Catholic social identity occurred in one of the most significant communities in England and Wales?

In order to answer this question it is necessary to consider how the position of Catholicism had changed from the 1640s to the 1670s. There is evidence that the size of the Catholic population increased in the years following the Civil War, as the missionaries operating out of the Cwm continued to minister to their flocks in the north of the county and succeeded in converting others.[153] However, Catholics also faced major challenges. The death of the first marquess, the great patron of Welsh Catholicism, and the exile and subsequent disinterest of his son in the late 1640s and 1650s meant that Catholics could not rely on the same high-level of protection as they had in the pre-war era. Members of the Catholic gentry found themselves targeted by the incoming republican government, losing their estates, the very foundation upon which was built their social position.[154] The position held by the Anglican gentry was remarkably dominant as they exploited the void left by the depletion of Somerset power.[155] Yet, the return of the family as a force in the region destabilised this political situation, particularly through the marquess of Worcester's manipulation of the Bench.[156]

It could be argued that these changes amounted to the contestation of distinct social groups over access to positions of power and influence at a local and national level. Positions of authority are key resources that allow social groups to consolidate

[152] Matthews, "'To a man for the King'", pp. 90-94.
[153] Jenkins, "Anti-popery on the Welsh Marches", pp. 276-9; Idem, "A Welsh Lancashire?
[154] Matthews, "'To a man for the King'", pp. 90-93.
[155] McClain, "Wentwood Forest riot", p. 119; McClain, *Beaufort*, p. 126.
[156] Rogers, *Memories of Monmouthshire*, pp. 87-119.

their power within society and to allocate other sought-after resources. Such competition has been seen as key to the emergence of group conflict scenarios. Also the proliferation of a negative social identity associated with Catholicism in English and Welsh political culture, created a further incentive for members of the Catholic elite in Monmouthshire to seek to challenge such notions and assert their own positive identity. Positions as MPs, JPs, deputy lieutenants and sheriffs were key points through which individuals could exercise judicial and political power. Importantly, those Catholics and their sympathisers who were promoted to these roles did not simply act to secure their own position, but then sought to benefit other Catholics through their refusal to implement recusancy laws, administer fines and investigate the activities of priests known to operate in the region. The behaviour of high-ranking Catholics and church papists is indicative of a significant movement towards circumventing the limitations placed upon Catholic political and social life. While the legal and political justification for discrimination was not challenged, deputy lieutenants, JPs, sheriffs and deputy-sheriffs clearly felt able to manipulate the local systems of social control to enable themselves and their co-religionists to escape financial recriminations and incarceration for their religious activities. Such actions moved well beyond attempts at surface level conformity.[157]

The co-operation of members of the Catholic elite in South Wales with the political and financial interests of the marquess of Worcester can be interpreted as an example of *realistic conflict*, identified by Tajfel and Turner and empirically investigated by Sherif et al.[158] In his research, Turner distinguished between social and realistic conflict between social groups.[159] It has been suggested that realistic conflict

[157] Trevor, *An Abstract Of Several Examinations*, pp.12-17.
[158] Tajfel and Turner, "The Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Behaviour", pp.
[159] J. C. Turner, "Social comparison and social identity: Some prospects for intergroup behaviour", *EJSP*, 5, 1975, pp. 1-13.

refers to scenarios where the subordinate and dominant groups are engaged in a conflict over resources, and is linked to self-interest and 'negatively interdependent group goals'.[160] While the Catholic gentry had marginal interest in the ability of the Somersets to exploit the physical resources of Wentwood, the ability to succeed in the contest for power with the Protestants that opposed Worcester was of significant benefit to the Catholic in-group as a whole. By gaining access to positions of local influence, wealthier Catholics could act to protect the community's religious lifestyles, challenging the negative image that shaped Catholic interactions with Anglican society.

This acquisition of power markedly affected the way in which Catholics lived in Monmouthshire in comparison to other regions. Mitchell has gone as far as to suggest that north-eastern Monmouthshire became a Catholic territory administered by Catholics.[161] The opportunity to occupy positions in the upper levels of local government also influenced the distribution of power lower down the social scale, as members of the Catholic community were also selected to serve as constables and church wardens.[162] The extent of the protection provided by sympathetic magistrates and officials is suggested by the events that took place at the Michaelmas Sessions in Monmouth in 1680. Arnold made complaints to the Lords against the county under-sheriff, Francis Jenkins, and three fellow JPs, Sir James Herbert, Captain Wosley and William Herbert. Arnold stated that he and his fellow JPs had sat in the case of between 20-40 Catholics who were to be tried for their refusal to take the oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy. When each of the defendants were asked if they had

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[160] Blanz et al, "Responding to negative social identity", p. 701; Sherif et al, *The Robbers Cave Experiments*; Turner, "Social comparison and social identity", pp. 5-34; Tajfel and Turner, "The social identity theory of intergroup behaviour", pp. 7-10.

[161] J. Mitchell, "Nathan Rogers and the Wentwood Case", *WHR*, 14, 1, 1988, p. 39.

[162] Trevor, *An Abstract Of Several Examinations*, p. 4.

anything to say against the charges, each man 'clapt on their Hats, put their Arms a-kimbo, and went scornfully out of Court; and were several Times required by the Court to come back, but refused'.[163] This contempt for the court was compounded by the refusal of the under-sheriff to return the defendants, and the refusal of three of the five JPs to sanction any legal action against the under-sheriff or the defendants. The Lords' judgement against Sir James Herbert did not question his loyalty to the Crown or the Protestant faith. However, his actions, along with those of Wosley, Jenkins and William Herbert, would suggest a significant degree of sympathy to the point of abetting large numbers of Catholics to avoid prosecution.[164] While the Lords' accepted the Protestantism of the JPs involved, some did have familial connections to the Catholic community. Francis Jenkins claimed that his failure to return the Catholic defendants to the courtroom was the result of his legal ignorance over who was responsible to executing such an action. However, his actions could be seen in a rather different light given that it was suggested in testimony to the Committee for Examinations in October 1680 that Jenkins' daughter was a known Catholic and married to the marquess of Worcester's steward.[165]

Even though Catholics were clearly enjoying considerable protection from the full force of anti-Catholic legislation in late 1680, the unifying effect of a politicised social identity had not succeeded in completely protecting the community from the increasingly violent anti-Catholicism that swept across the country from late 1678. A £200 reward was offered to encourage the arrest of priests operating in the region, and the Jesuit mission at the Cwm was raided and destroyed.[166] In all eight priests died on

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[163] *LJ*, "27th October – 22nd November 1680", pp. 674-676, accessed at http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=11737&strquery=monmouthshire, 18th January 2012.
[164] Ibid
[165] HMC, *The Manuscripts of the House of Lords 1678-1688*, 11th Report, Part 2, p. 207, item 295, 22nd November 1680.
[166] Croft, *A Short Narrative Of the Discovery of a College of Jesuits, passim*

the scaffold or in the Welsh countryside, the most in any region outside of the capital.[167] There was no hope of re-establishing a mission base in the style of the Cwm after the destruction of such a valuable centre of operations.

Yet, despite these significant changes to the nature of the community on the Marches, Catholics did not lose the ability to identify and empathise with other members of their Church. In January of 1680, a number of Catholics were still incarcerated in Monmouth gaol. They had been imprisoned during the anti-Catholic spasms of the previous year when they had refused to conform, acted to protect priests and failed to co-operate with Arnold's trials of the clergy.[168] However, in these sorry circumstances can still be found evidence of a shared conception of the community and positive identification associated with Catholicism. As these Monmouthshire Catholics languished in gaol, a co-religionist in Brecon was composing his last will and testament.[169] Hugh Beavan, a yeoman from Battle in modern-day Powis, had been previously convicted of recusancy, but had converted to Anglicanism in the few months before his death. While the diocesan authorities were willing to lift their excommunication of Beavan, they still required his executor account for his administration of the estate to the Archdeaconry of Brecon. It must be suspected that such a death-bed conversion was more inspired by a desire to ensure burial and rehabilitation within his parish, than by a genuine religious experience. Such reservations are strengthened when we note that Beavan bequeathed five pounds to those imprisoned in Monmouth.[170] It would seem that despite the inspections of the executorship of the estate, Beavan still sought to support his former co-religionists in their time of need.

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[167] Jenkins, "Anti-popery on the Welsh Marches", pp. 275-276.
[168] NLW, Welsh Probate Records, MS BR/1680/2 1680.
[169] Ibid.
[170] Ibid.

Further evidence of the continued assertion of a positive social identity by some Catholics even in the midst of the devastation of 1678-80 can be seen in the responses of the Catholics brought before the courts. The statements of several witnesses that were brought before the Committee of Examinations all claimed that the Catholics that Arnold had sought to prosecute in 1680 had brazenly ignored the authority of the court and had behaved provocatively. They were reported to have worn their hats in the court, laughed at the demands that they return to the court and spoke openly against the evidence presented by Bedloe of a Catholic plot operating in the country.[171] These actions suggest their considerable confidence in their ability to avoid the charges brought against them. Clearly, from this provocative behaviour it would appear that some Catholics continued to act collectively in resisting attempts to curtail their religious activities and the negative social identity as law-breakers which the state ascribed to them.

While the decline of the Catholic community in South Wales cannot simply be seen as a catastrophic collapse following the ravages of the Popish Plot, significant problems did face them. Following the raid at the Cwm and the collapse of the Jesuit mission, the Catholics of Monmouthshire were left without the clear clerical leadership that they had enjoyed since the early 1600s. While a new Franciscan mission was eventually established in Abergavenny during the reign in James II, the numbers of priests in the region was never returned to the same levels that had been seen when the Cwm was in operation.[172] The decline in clerical and lay leadership for the community did have a significant effect. While Monmouthshire retained a large Catholic

[171] *LJ*, "27th October – 22nd November 1680", pp. 674-676, accessed at http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=11737&strquery=monmouthshire, 18th January 2012; H.M.C., *The Manuscripts of the House of Lords*, 11th Report, Part 2, p. 207, item 295.
[172] Miller, *Popery and Politics in England, 1660-1688*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1973) p. 242.

population into the modern era, it did not represent the force it had once been, a cultural oddity in an era when Methodism and Baptist revivals would dominate Wales' religious life.

The fate of the community in North Wales during the 1670s and 1680s was rather different to that in the south. The north of the country did not possess as significant a Catholic minority as the southern Marches. However, it was based around the only Catholic shrine that remained in operation in England or Wales, giving the community a distinctive character. Contained within a different Jesuit mission territory to the south, the Catholics of Flintshire maintained significant links to communities in neighbouring Lancashire and Cheshire.[173] Further contrasts can be seen in the fates of the missions that operated in the north and south. While the Jesuit mission at the Cwm provided many of the priests in Monmouthshire and was destroyed in 1679, the community in Holywell was served by a secular and Jesuit mission. The lay leadership was also organised in a different fashion in Flintshire and Denbighshire to that in South Wales. Rather than possessing a dominant Catholic family like the Somersets of Raglan, the most significant Catholic magnates in the region were the Herberts. However, their seat at Powis Castle was distant being located in Welshpool, and they did not control the shrine to St Winifred. Instead the community was dominated by Catholic gentry who were divided in their allegiance to the two missions competing for control of the lucrative and important pilgrimage site.[174]

The fact that the kind of vociferous and often violent dispute between Catholics and Protestants that emerged in Monmouthshire did not appear further north could be the product of the different ways in which these communities evolved. As appeared

[173] For details of the intermarriage of members of the Catholic gentry of North Wales, Lancashire, Cheshire and other English counties, see Appendix B.
[174] Seguin, "Cures and Controversy in Early Modern Wales", pp. 10-16.

in late seventeenth-century Monmouthshire, the development of social identity can be strongly affected by the nature of the community. Catholics in both North and South Wales were subject to the same anti-Catholic legislation, with neither group being able to escape the ideology that sought to justify such sanctions. However, as has been discussed previously, during the mid-seventeenth century, anti-Catholicism contribute to divisions in the community.

The twisted logic that led some missionaries to betray their fellow priests and co-religionists, demonstrates the degree to which the social identity created in this community was based more on the interests of different groups within the clergy than on a unified community. Whereas in Monmouthshire, Catholicism had been supported and nurtured under the leadership of a few dominant families and the mission that they had created, Flintshire Catholics appear not to have benefitted from such leadership. It seems that the combination of these intragroup conflicts and the wider attack on Catholicism that occurred in the 1670s meant that the shrine went into a significant decline until the mid-1680s.[175] It could be argued that it was this failure to create a politicised or even cohesive Catholic social identity and the resultant lack of conflict with members of the Anglican community, which saved the missions of North Wales from the destruction wrought on their colleagues in the south, but also meant that the community was less influential and more divided.

Despite the problems faced by some Welsh Catholic communities, the accession of a Catholic monarch in 1685 created new opportunities for increased toleration. In Welshpool, John Stevens, a Catholic, served as a commissioner of excises during James II's reign. He claimed both his father and grandfather had also served in civil

[175] It was noted when the king and queen visited the shrine in the 1686 that the chapel had been used as a court-house for some time. Ibid, p. 16.

posts, but the removal of the barriers of the Test Acts allowed him to occupy the post openly as a Catholic.[176] Furthermore, the town's community also benefitted from the decision by the marquess of Powis and his countess, to create a public chapel and school.[177] In Holywell, the status of St Winifred's Well was significantly raised when the king and queen visited in 1686 to pray for God's assistance in the conception of an heir. However, the ensuing fiasco over the granting of the shrine to the care of the Jesuits, suggests that the community had still not resolved its differences.[178] In Monmouthshire, the accession of James facilitated the social and political changes that enabled the rebuilding of the Catholic community's damaged prospects. In 1687, the Franciscan mission began operating with the support of Thomas Gunter and his wife, whose home in Frogmore Street was eventually used as the site for a Catholic chapel in the town in 1690.[179]

At a national level, Catholic writers continued to challenge the image of Catholicism as a threatening political force in the country that had been a lingering feature for over a century. Numerous pamphlets continued to be produced in the closing decades of the seventeenth century, years when the lives of Catholics would see further change in their status and ability to participate in public life. Gother's extensively republished *A Papist Misrepresented and Represented* (1686) provided a defence against the image of Catholics that existed at the time, asserting that they are 'foully Mis represented, and shew in publick as much unlike what they are, as the Christians were of old by the Gentiles'.[180] Gother directly challenged the key

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[176] BL, Lansdowne MS 828. The version of Stevens' account of his departure from Wales was reproduced in D. L. Jones, "The Glorious Revolution in Wales", *NLWJ*, 26, 1, 1989, pp. 28-30.
[177] T. B. Trappes-Lomax, "Roman Catholicism in Montgomeryshire since 1559", *MC*, 55, 1, 1957, p. 18.
[178] H. Foley, *Records of the English Province of the Society of the Jesus*, Vol. 5, (New York, Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1966) p. 935.
[179] Jenkins, "A Welsh Lancashire?", p. 180.
[180] John Gother, *A Papist Mis-represented and Represented: Or, A Twofold Character of Popery* (London, 1686), p. 187.

assumptions that formed the basis of the anti-Catholic stereotype that he had been so familiar with before his conversion.[181] Gother rejected claims that Catholics worshiped the dead in their veneration of the saints, their relics or the Host, and that they believed that the Virgin was more powerful than Christ.[182] The notion that Catholics were anti-Christians because their belief in salvation through good works invalidated Christ's sacrifice, was also denounced.[183]

Through his repudiation of the common prejudices and stereotypes of Catholics, Gother sought to demonstrate how 'different is the Papist, as reputed by his Maligners, from the Papist, as to what he is in himself'.[184] He stated that the image of Catholicism that was created in the anti-Catholic discourse was the product of Protestants willingness to accept and believe that the views of extremists and those opposed to the Church were exemplary of the true teachings of the Church. He compared these practices to those of extremist republicans who sought to demonise the monarchy and overthrow the government.[185] Instead of accepting this vilification, he demanded that Catholics be judged on how they actually conducted themselves, hoping that this would reveal that the image that had been created was 'but only of the skin' that has been used to cover and castigate them.[186]

Gother's assertions of a positive Catholic identity were not without controversy, as several ripostes were produced. With a Catholic monarch upon the throne and greater toleration of Catholics in public life appearing to be the inevitable outcome, Gother's discussions can perhaps be seen as reflecting the need within the community

[181] Ibid, pp. 9-10.
[182] Ibid
[183] Ibid
[184] Ibid,
[185] Ibid
[186] Ibid, pp. 184-5

to assert their own social identity after the catastrophe of the Popish Plot and Exclusion Crisis, and justify their increased profile in English society.

The experiences of the Catholic community in the 1660s and 1670s had ranged from sporadic toleration to savage reprisal. However, the suggestion that the actions of John Arnold and his supporters in South Wales eradicated any sense of politicised identity amongst the Welsh Catholic community would ignore the involvement of some Catholics in the political crises that accompanied the Revolution of 1688. The ousting of the Catholic regime placed many Catholics in a difficult, even threatening position. The remaining Catholic magnate in Wales, the marquess of Powis, followed James into exile, where he was rewarded with a dukedom and played a highly significant role in the Court. The family would remain Catholic, and Powis Castle was returned to the second marquess in 1722.[187]

Even middling Catholics seem to have found a political identity associated with the Jacobite cause. John Stevens' eyewitness account of the 1688 Revolution provides clear insight as to why some Catholics chose to join the Jacobite cause, even when it meant leaving their family and property. Stevens was eventually informed that he was to be seized for his refusal to support William, Prince of Orange, and so determined 'to be more vigilant in the Performance of my Duty to that Prince in whose service I had the Honor to be employ'd'.[188] It would seem that his position as an official had created a sense of political allegiance that overrode any desire to remain in his home town, or to seek to protect his property against those who supported the invading forces. It would also seem that the speed at which his acquaintances and associates

[187] Stater, "Herbert, William", *ODNB*; P. Hopkins, "Herbert, William, second marquess of Powis and Jacobite second duke of Powis (1657/61–1745)", *ODNB*, 2004, accessed http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/13061, 13th March 2012.
[188] British Library, Lansdowne MS 828, transcribed in Jones, "The Glorious Revolution in Wales", *NLWJ*, 26, 1, 1989, p. 29.

had changed their allegiance, even while still professing their loyalty to James, had a disquieting effect on Stevens. The fact that he had to send away his horses and hurry home to protect his property added further to his sense of where his duty lay. The degree to which this political loyalty was tied to his religious identity is perhaps not initially obvious. However, Stevens and other Catholics in the areas were clearly targeted by those who supported the change of regime because of their religion. Stevens, as a public official, was also one of those that had benefitted from James' policies.[189]

In the aftermath of the 1688 Revolution, some Catholics chose to fashion a new politicised social identity. The association between Jacobitism and Catholicism was clear. The marquess of Powis, the leading Catholic aristocrat in the country, and his son were both outlawed following William Herbert's flight into exile. His son was also placed under arrest between May and November 1689 and again between December 1696 and June 1697.[190] However, the Jacobite cause in Wales appears to have run deeper than exiled aristocratic leaders. In June 1694, one George Wilson reported that, in 1689, while living at Redland on the Welsh border, he had been drawn into a Jacobite conspiracy to help transport a Dr Bromfield out of the country. His local vicar and others reported that Wilson had been a Catholic for at least six years.[191] This escape attempt drew in leading members of North Wales' Catholic gentry such Sir Pyers Mostyn of Talacre and a member of the Pennant family. He also stated that he had co-operated with leading Catholics from Lancashire, including Lord Molyneaux, in ferrying news and informants from Ireland into the country.[192] Orders,

[189] Ibid.
[190] Stater, "Herbert, William", *ODNB*; Hopkins, "Herbert, William", *ODNB*.
[191] LRO MS DDKE 9/67/56.
[192] HMC, *The Manuscripts of Lord Kenyon*, 14th Report, Appendix IV, 1894, 27th June 1694.

seals and instructions from James II were brought in through this route.[193] He and others were also reported to have made lists of those men in North Wales and the English counties across the border, who would lend support to a Jacobite invasion.[194] Perhaps most interestingly, Wilson also stated that he attended Jacobite meetings 'at the signe of "the Starr", an inn in Holywell, in Flintshire'.[195] The Star Inn had been built by the Jesuits as a means of accommodating pilgrims to St Winifrid's Shrine and as the base for their operations. It had been attacked by a mob in 1688, but was clearly still being used by Catholics as a centre for their political operations the following year.[196]

The reported involvement of Sir Pyers Mostyn in these schemes is also noteworthy. While in the closing years of the century Sir Pyers and his allies were using the Catholic networks that emanated from centres like Holywell, the very venues in which they met had also inspired mistrust and betrayal within the community. The Star Inn that served as a Jacobite meeting place in 1689, had been the inn that had nearly torn the community apart and highlighted the discordant nature of Catholic identity within this unique community when it was built by his grandmother in the mid-1600s.[197] The history of that inn over three generations perhaps symbolises very aptly the instability, destructive potential and political power of Catholic identity over a turbulent 40 years.

The Catholic identity that had emerged in Wales by the second half of the seventeenth century is indicative of the way in which identity is constructed in a complex fashion,

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[193] Ibid.
[194] Ibid.
[195] HMC, *The Manuscripts of Lord Kenyon*, 14th Report, Appendix IV, 1894, 27th June 1694
[196] Henry Foley, Records of the English Province of the Society of Jesus, (London, Burns and Oates, 1875-1883) Vol. 5, 943-944.
[197] Ibid, Vol. 4, p. 530.

relating to various aspects of social interaction. Identity can be seen as the means by which individuals establish their place in society, because it incorporates a sense of belonging to a community, the aspirations of that group and its relations with others who are considered to be distinct and different. These concepts had formed the basis of Catholic interaction with wider English and Welsh society since the Reformation. The concern of writers like Southwell and Persons to guide the laity as it became clear that Anglicanism was to remain the state religion, was indicative of how a distinct identity was being formed to support the remaining Catholic population as they adapted to their subordinate position. The general need to create a social identity that could be seen as Catholic became even more apparent as the negative stereotype created by anti-popish politics and culture, continued to be developed and promoted throughout the seventeenth century. The writings of later Catholic authors spoke of a clear desire amongst some to challenge these views of Catholicism which had been used to justify legal and political discrimination against all member of the Roman Church. While such ideas were expressed in the writings of the English Catholic clergy, some of whom were living on the Continent, the notion of a cohesive identity that allowed Catholics to express some form of belonging within an often disparate Church was seen in the actions of Welsh Catholics. The Catholic identity that formed in these communities was based on these conceptions of sameness and difference, while also being adapted to suit the community's needs in changing times.

However, Catholic identity must not be thought of as homogenous. Comparisons between the identities that emerged amongst the communities of North and South Wales show how they should be understood as being distinctly flavoured by the political and cultural circumstances in which they were created. While the Catholics of Monmouthshire and the southern Marches were encouraged to act in a

co-operative fashion as more of them were afforded opportunities to exercise political and legal authority, such cohesiveness was not in evidence in North Wales. In this community, lacking the political leadership of a significant aristocratic family and solidarity between missionaries, allegiances were drawn along Jesuit and secular clerical lines. The relationship between the nature of Catholic social identity and the structure of the community is highlighted by the way in which Catholics in South Wales became more involved in the politics of their region than their co-religionists elsewhere in the country. Different elements of Catholic life and the way that the communities were structured appear to have had a specific impact on the Catholic social identity that emerged in these regions. It is these aspects of Catholic's social environment that will be examined in the next chapters.

Chapter Five
"Put to death indeed in the flesh, but enlivened in the spirit": Identity Formation in the Martyrdom of St. David Lewis[1]

On the 27th August, 1679, a 63 year old priest was transported by hurdle from the gaol at Usk to his place of execution on Porthycarne Street, just outside the town. Fr David Lewis had served the Catholics of south-east Wales for 32 years, performing Mass at many of the community's chapels. His death was the direct result of the remarkable outburst of anti-Catholic violence, which had spread across South Wales and the Marches since accusations of a supposed Catholic plot had been made in London. In an already fraught local climate the increased interest shown by Parliament in the suppression of Catholicism and apprehending of priests, meant that Lewis' congregations were coming under increasing pressure. Despite the arrest of many priests and increased scrutiny of Catholics in the region, a large crowd of supporters, gathered at the scaffold to witness Lewis' execution and hear his last sermon.[2]

He preached on the text 1 Peter, 4:15-16, 'But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or a railer or coveter of other men's things. But, if as a Christian, let him not be ashamed: but let him glorify God in that name'.[3] He also exhorted the crowd to remain steadfast in their faith, and follow the Gospels' teaching of forgiveness and love for their persecutors.[4] He denied the lurid accusations made in

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[1] Douai-Rheims Bible, First Epistle of Peter, 3:18, accessed http://www.drbo.org/chapter/67005.htm, 30th July 2010.
[2] T. P. Ellis, *The Catholic Martyrs of Wales, 1535-1680*, (London, Burns, Oates and Washborne, 1933) pp. 137-139;
[3]Douai-Rheims Bible, First Epistle of Peter, 3:18, accessed http://www.drbo.org/chapter/67005.htm, 30th July 2010.
[4] NLW MS Baker-Gabb, 703. This document was kept within the papers of the Baker-Gabb family and deposited with the National Library of Wales along with a number of other documents collected by the family relating to Lewis trial and the propaganda published against him by Bishop Croft and others (NLW MSS Baker Gabb, 723, 724, 726 and 704). The handwritten speech is claimed to be the written script that Lewis prepared while in prison in readiness for the execution. The document also contains a written account of Lewis' trial and arrest, complete with the author's corrections prior to publication. The account matches that which was published in the contemporary press.

the contemporary press and on the stage that he was a swindler, a drunk and a liar, and stated unequivocally that he was dying for no other reasons than his faith and his vocation.[5] After his death, his remains were taken from the site by the local people and buried in a grave, near the west door of the town's parish church, where they remain to the present day.[6]

In contrast to the English Catholic martyrs of the late sixteenth century, the deaths of several priests on the Welsh Marches in 1678-80 have received rather scant attention from historians. Lewis' grave in a quiet country church seems perhaps appropriate for a martyr-saint, who has received only sporadic attention outside of the Catholic community of South Wales. Like other priests executed as a result of the panic over a supposed popish conspiracy, St David Lewis seems to have proved difficult to locate within the wider story of Catholic martyrdom in the British Isles. He has only been discussed in historical studies of the Popish Plot and its political ramifications, or the hagiographical texts produced by Catholic writers.[7] In many respects Lewis was untypical of the martyrs that have been studied by historians. An elderly man by early modern standards, he had served on the mission for many years. The martyrdom of St David Lewis affords historians real insight into the complex interaction of national concerns over the presence of priests in the country and localised tensions between Protestants and Catholics, which predated the more generalised scare produced by Oates' allegations.

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[5] Anon., *The Condemnation of the Cheating Popish Priest* (London, 1679); Anon., *A Letter From a Gentleman in the Country, To his Friend in London* (London, 1679).; Herbert Croft, *A Short Narrative Of the Discovery of a College of Jesuits, At a Place called the Come* (London, 1679); Nathaniel Lee, *Cæsar Borgia; Son of Pope Alexander The Sixth: A Tragedy Acted at the Duke's Theatre* (London, 1696, first performed in 1680), p. 70; NLW, MS Baker-Gabb, 703.
[6] Ellis, *The Catholic Martyrs of Wales*, pp. 137-139.
[7] Ibid, pp. 129-39; P. Jenkins, "Anti-Popery on the Welsh Marches in the Seventeenth Century", *HJ*, 23, 2, 1980, pp. 275-293.

The lack of interest that has been shown in the martyrs created during the Popish Plot has meant that much of the historical analysis of the nature and significance of early modern martyrdom is difficult to apply to those men who were executed at the end of the seventeenth century. This case study will attempt to rectify this imbalance by examining the martyrdom of St. David Lewis, the last Catholic priest to be executed in Wales.[8] It will suggest that the martyrs of the late seventeenth century have been largely ignored by historians, and that their experiences are subtly different from those of the martyrs of the sixteenth century. This presents a challenge to the current views of martyrdom promoted in some historical studies.

Some of the most recent studies have rejected the application of theories from the social sciences to enhance the historian's understanding of martyrdom.[9] However, this case study will propose a new approach to the study of martyrdom, utilising theories that enhance our understanding of the meaning of martyrdom for the individual and their community. It will consider the psychological process that the individual underwent as they faced their impending death, and the importance of the image of the martyr in bolstering both individual and group social identity. This chapter will also demonstrate the importance of considering the emotional and psychological implications of martyrdom for both the individual and the group, in order to develop a fuller understanding of this extraordinary expression of faith. Psychological theory has an important role in augmenting the historian's analytical skills by increasing our awareness of the complexity of such social phenomena as prejudice, and its effect on both the group that maintains bigoted views and their

[8] The only examinations of the martyrdom amongst the late seventeenth-century clergy that have been produced in the modern era are the hagiographical accounts. The most comprehensive of these is Ellis, *The Catholic Martyrs of Wales*.
[9] B. S. Gregory, *Salvation at Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 2001) pp. 10, 99-100.

targets. This is an aspect of martyrdom that has not yet been discussed, but which has significant implications for our understanding of the way that martyrdom effected wider group identity, and the relationship between the laity and the clergy in Welsh Catholic culture.

The subject of martyrdom presents the historian with numerous problems of interpretation in attempting to understand one of the most shocking aspects of early modern European culture. The transformation of the religious landscape that resulted from the Reformation, left no corner of Europe untouched, with the behaviour, beliefs and thoughts of individuals being scrutinised in a new way.[10] State sanctioned persecution of both Catholics and various Protestant sects meant that many individuals from differing social backgrounds found themselves faced with the impossible choice of obeying their conscience or preserving their lives.[11] Faced with the prospect of torture and horrifying execution, many men and women chose to convert and accept official teachings, at least at a superficial level. However, a considerable number chose instead to remain committed to what they saw as the true faith, and died for their beliefs. Such commitment in the face of bloody, agonising and humiliating executions, speaks of both the bravery of the individuals, and of the degree to which religious faith saturated early modern society.

As well as the challenges presented by such emotive and disturbing subject matter, historians must also negotiate the multiplicity of meanings and interpretations that can surround martyrdom. The individual martyr, the authorities that prosecuted

[10] E. Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400-1580* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1992) pp. 478-503; L. McClain, *Lest We Be Damned: Practical Innovation and Lived Experience among Catholics in Protestant England, 1559-1642* (London, Routledge, 2004) pp. 237-241.

[11] A. Walsham, *Church Papists: Catholicism, Conformity and Confessional Polemic in Early Modern England* (Woodbridge, The Royal Historical Society Publications, 1993) pp. 73-75.

and executed them, and the persecuted religious community all played significant roles in the judicial, social and religious process that was taking place.[12] In recent years, historians have begun to unpick the intricate weaving of fact and fiction that surrounds martyrs, and have shown the importance of these men and women in developing our understanding of both the communities from which they came and the regimes that put them to death. Some of these studies have focused on the motivations of the martyrs themselves, while others have examined the way in which martyrs were created and memorialised as heroes for their religious cause.[13] Faced with explaining such powerful religious statements that seem to contradict every rational urge to preserve their lives, historians have sought answers in a number of different theoretical approaches. Some of this research has been interdisciplinary in nature, while other historians have questioned the efficacy of theories drawn from other intellectual traditions, emphasising instead the need to understand martyrdom within the specific cultural and social context of the early modern period.[14]

However, the research that has been produced on Catholic martyrs has focused overwhelmingly on the priests and lay-men and -women who were executed by the Elizabethan and Jacobean regimes, with little discussion of those who died at the end

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[12] A. Dillon, *The Construction of Martyrdom in the English Catholic Community, 1535-1603* (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2002), pp. 72-74.

[13] Gregory, *Salvation at Stake*, p. 21; Dillon, *The Construction of Martyrdom*, pp. 72-100; S. Covington, *The Trail of Martyrdom: Persecution and Resistance in Sixteenth-Century England* (Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame, 2003) pp. 72-98; S. B. Monta, *Martyrdom and Literature in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005) p. 4; T. M. McCoog, S. J., "Construing martyrdom in the English Catholic community, 1582-1602", in E. Shagan (ed.), *Catholics and the "Protestant nation": Religious politics and identity in early modern England*, (Manchester, University of Manchester Press, 2005) pp. 95-127; S. Covington, "Consolation on Golgotha": Comforters and Sustainers of Dying Priests in England, 1580-1625", *JEH*, 60, 2, 2009, pp. 270-293.

[14] S. Byman, "Ritualistic Acts and Compulsive Behavior: The Pattern of Tudor Martyrdom", *AHR*, 83, 3, 1978, pp. 625-643; D. T. Bradford, "Early Christian Martyrdom and the Psychology of Depression, Suicide, and Bodily Mutilation", *Psychotherapy*, 27, 1, 1990, pp. 30-42; Gregory, *Salvation at Stake*, p. 8.

of the seventeenth century.[15] This raises interesting questions about the way in which martyrs and martyrdom have been analysed by historians. While the details of these men's lives and deaths have been documented in martyrologies and hagiographical texts, these are clearly intended to provide inspiration for the faithful. There is a clear need to relate the experiences of these late seventeenth-century martyrs to the new research produced by modern historians. In doing so, new insights have been revealed into the behaviour of martyrs, the production and distribution of martyrological literature, and the role of martyrs in contesting the power of the Protestant authorities in the emerging public sphere.

The most recent studies of sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century European martyrdom have highlighted the difficulties of analysing an area of human experience that the vast majority of people find entirely alien. Gregory has argued that 'Christian martyrs in early modern Europe will remain opaque to a certain extent that their religiosity - with all that that entails - remains alien, obscured by modern and/or post-modern assumptions'.[16] He goes on to assert that the post-modern rejection of any universal truth creates this problem, as it makes it profoundly difficult for the modern observer to understand the religious fervour that drove the early modern martyrs.[17] The secularisation of the modern world has led the development of wildly different views on religious certainty to those that predominated in the early modern period.

In order to overcome this intellectual barrier between secular modernity and the kind of religiosity that inspired such extreme levels of religious devotion, historians

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[15] Dillon, Gregory, Covington and McCoog all focus on the martyrs of the sixteenth and early seventeenth century. Gregory, *Salvation at Stake*, p. 21; Dillon, *The Construction of Martyrdom*, pp. 72-100; Covington, *The Trail of Martyrdom,* pp. 72-98; McCoog, "Construing martyrdom in the English Catholic community", in Shagan (ed.), *Catholics and the "Protestant nation"*, pp. 95-127; Covington, "Consolation on Golgotha", pp. 270-293.
[16] Gregory, *Salvation at Stake*, p. 8.
[17] Ibid, pp. 9-10.

have had to re-examine what a martyr was in this era. They have drawn attention to the cultural and political processes that transformed often ordinary men and women into martyrs, and the degree to which the martyr, the State, the crowd and the Catholic and Protestant churches participated in this process. In her study of sixteenth-century English martyrs, Covington suggests that martyrdom was a journey, with each stage of prosecution, imprisonment and execution, presenting both the persecuted and the persecutor with opportunities to shape the events that were unfolding. She demonstrates this point particularly clearly in her examination of the execution of Catholic priests during the reign of Elizabeth I.[18] It would perhaps appear at first glance, that the execution was the most powerful and clear demonstration of the Protestant authorities' power over those who refused to obey their religious decrees. The humiliating and gruesome execution of priests by hanging, drawing and quartering denied them the status of martyr by labelling them traitors. However, as Covington points out, executions could become contested spheres of power, where the competing discourses of the authorities, the prospective martyr and the crowd that had come to view the execution, could all influence how the event was perceived by the population at large.[19]

Dillon has also emphasised the degree to which the martyr was created by the communities to which they belonged. Concentrating her analysis on the Catholic martyrs of the sixteenth century, she suggests that martyrs helped to unite English Catholics through a powerful religious identity and a decisive declaration of Catholic piety.[20] The Catholic identity that was being fashioned in the martyrologies that were composed by exiled Catholics and secretly imported back into England, reflected not

[18] Covington, *The Trail of Martyrdom*, p. 197.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Dillon, *The Construction of Martyrdom*, p. 8.

only the interests of those Catholics living in Britain, but also the Catholic states that provided refuge for the émigré authors. McCoog has also noted the power of the martyrs as rallying points for Catholics living in England, and as a means of motivating the Catholic Church to launch a campaign against Elizabeth's Protestant state or to fund the community living in exile.[21]

However, the notion that martyrdom was contested, constructed and reshaped during the early modern period has not gone unchallenged. Gregory has suggested that the view that martyrdom was a social construct reflects modern poststructural views on the unattainable nature of truth and multiple discourses.[22] He asserts that such views mean that poststructuralism cannot provide any real insight into the kind of religious conviction that celebrates and leads individuals to martyrdom. Instead he suggests that historians must also 'understand central aspects of sixteenth-century Christian faith'.[23] A failure to understand martyrdom is the result of the failure to understand 'the religious convictions at its heart'.[24] He advocates an understanding of martyrs as exemplary rather than fanatical individuals, who came to represent the ultimate expression of early modern religious commitment. According to Gregory, it is necessary for modern historians to develop an understanding of the certainty of early modern religious belief so as to produce a distinct approach to historical analysis of the period that has 'methodological astuteness' and produces a new understanding of the religious belief in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[25]

While Covington and Dillon have analysed martyrdom as an expression of the power struggle between Catholics and Protestants in early modern England, Gregory

[21] McCoog,, "Construing martyrdom in the English Catholic community", p. 105
[22] Gregory, *Salvation at Stake*, pp. 8-10.
[23]Ibid, p. 8.
[24] Ibid, p. 8.
[25] Ibid, p. 9.

has instead chosen to focus on individual European martyrs and their perceptions of their deaths and the meaning of this ultimate sacrifice for faith. Both interpretations provide valuable insight into different aspects of early modern martyrdom. The usefulness of the poststructuralist concept of discourse is shown clearly when we view the executions of members of the clergy and laity as expressions of the state's authority and as statements of resistance by persecuted groups. It helps elucidate the complex interplay of power that centred on the creation of the martyr. However, Gregory has made an important point about the need to move beyond our own modern views on religious belief, representations of reality and the nature of truth in order to appreciate the perspective of the martyrs themselves.

The fact that Dillon, Covington and Gregory all draw their varying conclusions on the nature of martyrdom from similar source materials produced by supporters and detractors of the martyr's cause, is indicative of the degree to which this is a complex, multifaceted area of early modern life. While Dillon and Covington have viewed the various accounts of such executions as artefacts from the early modern power struggle, Gregory has interpreted these martyrological texts as accurate descriptions of the religious feelings that inspired men and women to witness for their faith in such a dramatic fashion.[26] Gregory asserts that early modern martyrdom should be understood as an expression of a faith based on a belief in a single, universal truth, rather than as a manifestation of mental illness or as the creation of various religious groups.

Gregory has endeavoured to draw the reader into the religious world that the early modern martyr occupied, but his view leaves many questions unanswered and

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[26] Dillon, *The Construction of Martyrdom*, pp. 72-74, 78; Covington, *The Trail of Martyrdom*, pp. 20, 73, 98; Gregory, *Salvation at Stake*, pp. 13-14.

only appears to have limited applicability. It could be argued that Gregory's emphasis of early modern martyrdom as an exemplary expression of religious belief in the period, leaves too little room for the complex socio-political circumstances that led to the martyr's execution.[27] This understanding of martyrdom as primarily an expression of personal faith that does not necessarily reflect the experiences of more than a few individuals. Gregory limits early modern martyrs to being ultimately motivated by faith, with little attention given to other possible explanations or motives.[28] Such a complicated and emotive subject as martyrdom surely requires a deeper analysis of the martyr's motivation and the conditions that created them. Such analysis should consider whether they or others were attempting to construct a particular social image, and what function, social and personal, was fulfilled by its construction. While the singular beliefs of early modern religion undoubtedly played a significant role in inspiring fervent devotion among many individuals, there is a clear need to consider wider explanations, particularly when dealing with the experiences of such martyrs as St. David Lewis.

Lewis' life as a priest and his death as a martyr can be seen as reflecting both certain common elements of clerical life in the seventeenth century, and also more unusual aspects that has not been accounted for in the historical investigations of this generation of missionaries. Like other Welsh priests of the early modern era, Lewis was educated on the Continent in the heart of Catholic Europe, but took up his ministry in the rather less salubrious surroundings of Wales.[29] The lack of priests willing to work in the taxing geography, poor climate and poorer society of seventeenth century Wales, meant that men with the necessary linguistic and pastoral skills were in short

[27] Gregory, *Salvation at Stake*, p. 8.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Ellis, *The Catholic Martyrs of Wales, 1535-1680*, pp. 129-130.

supply. While the Welsh Marches were far from lawless, the legal and political documents produced during the crisis of the 1670s reveal that the region could still be a tense and violent place to live. Drunkenness and physical assault seem not to have been an uncommon part of life for the men of the Marches.[30]

It was in this world that Lewis had ministered for over thirty years. As with the other Welsh priests that died during the Popish Plot, he was a relatively elderly man at the time of his arrest.[31] His life as a missionary priest does not seem to have been marked by a zeal for martyrdom, and he ministered to a community of Catholics that was rather different to the wealthy, prominent families of the south-east of England. Instead Lewis preached and worked over a wide ranging area of Monmouthshire, regularly travelling from Abergavenny to Llantarnum near Newport, and to the mission centre at the Cwm on the border with Herefordshire.[32] It should be emphasised that travel throughout South Wales seems to have been an accepted part of life for the missionaries of the region, with priests operating in Breconshire and Glamorgan.[33]

These details of a missionary life lived in the field might suggest that Lewis was perhaps little different from the local priests that had gone before him, or his fellow martyrs that died as a result of the Popish Plot. However, during his imprisonment, trial and arrest, Lewis' experience took a more uncommon turn, providing historians with a unique insight into the experiences of a Welsh martyr of this era. While he did not choose to flee from his persecutors, Lewis did attempt to keep a low profile in 1678, using the house of a Catholic blacksmith in the village of

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[30] Anon., *The trial of John Giles at the Sessions House in the Old Bayly*, (London, 1681) p. 36; Sir John Trevor, *An Abstract Of Several Examinations Taken upon Oath, in the Counties of Monmouth and Hereford* (London, 1680) pp. 17-18.
[31] Ellis, *The Catholic Martyrs of Wales*, p. 162
[32] Trevor, *An Abstract Of Several Examinations*, pp. 3-9.
[33] Ellis, *The Catholic Martyrs of Wales*, p. 123.

Llantarnum as a place to stay during the height of the priest-hunting furore.[34] The atypicality of Lewis' arrest and trial is also demonstrated by the difficulties faced by his persecutors in securing a prosecution. Kenyon describes how Arnold, a JP and MP, had to resort to having prospective witnesses beaten in order to find anyone willing to testify against Lewis.[35] Catholics were imprisoned in an effort to make them testify.[36]

Perhaps most importantly, during his imprisonment and trial, Lewis produced his own account of the proceedings against him, along with a manuscript of the last speech he was to deliver from the scaffold.[37] None of the other martyrs that died in Wales in this period provided such an account of their conduct. These documents offer historians the opportunity to consider how a priest, on the verge of martyrdom, sought to engage with the legal process, shape his own identity and influence his legacy in the Catholic community and beyond. All these aspects of Lewis' arrest and trial suggest a clear difference between him and the Catholic missionaries who arrived in Britain in the late sixteenth century, described by Gregory as actively seeking martyrdom by ministering in areas where they were likely to attract the attentions of the authorities.[38] While Lewis did demonstrate a brave acceptance of his fate on the scaffold, to simply attribute such actions to faith does not recognise the important implications of Lewis' behaviour in the construction of a distinct Catholic identity. Clearly the case of this little known saint requires a different approach to martyrdom than has been previously adopted.

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[34] Ellis, *The Catholic Martyrs of Wales,* pp. 130-131.
[35] J. P. Kenyon, *The Popish Plot* (London, Heinemann, 1972) p. 213. Frustratingly, Kenyon does not offer a source for this account.
[36] NLW Welsh Probate Records, MS BR/1680/2 1680.
[37] St. David Lewis, *A Narrative of the Imprisonment and Tryal of Mr. David Lewis, Priest of the Society of Jesus* (London, 1679) p. 3;
[38] Gregory, *Salvation at Stake*, pp. 103-105.

Gregory argues persuasively that historians need to understand martyrdom within the specific religious context of the early modern period. However, there is also a need to consider the wider social and cultural context of martyrs like St David Lewis. For Lewis there is a need to consider the increased influence and power of Catholics in the Marches during the 1660s and 1670s and the concomitant atmosphere of prejudice and fear that had developed in the region. It was in this climate of escalating persecution and interdenominational tension that Lewis was executed.[39] It was also within this social and cultural context that Catholic identity as a distinct religious group was forming. The impact of anti-popery as a formative influence upon Catholic identity, has not been discussed in relation to the phenomenon of martyrdom. However, as has been shown time and again by historians, that martyrs and the literature and relics that were generated by their deaths played crucial roles in the production of targeted propaganda, which galvanised religious communities.[40]

The need to understand the link between martyrdom and persecution is also necessary because they were concurrent in the early modern mind. Walsham has rightly argued that the modern, antonymous conception of tolerance and intolerance, persecutor and persecuted, does not reflect how such ideas were thought of in the early modern period.[41] Religious groups could be mercilessly persecuted in one region of Europe, while the same groups could themselves be merciless persecutors only a few hundred miles away. It must be remembered that the Roman Church that was producing and supporting the missionaries that died on English scaffolds, also mercilessly eradicating Protestantism and "heresy" from those lands it ruled over on

[39] Nathan Rogers, *Memories of Monmouthshire*, Ivor Waters (ed.) (Chepstow, Moss Rose, 1978 [1708]), pp 80-85.
[40] Dillon, *The Construction of Martyrdom*, p. 100; Covington, *The Trail of Martyrdom*, p. 9
[41] Walsham, *Charitable Hatred*, pp. 1-3.

the Continent.[42] To the early modern mind, the apparent hypocrisy of condemning one religious denomination for persecution while persecuting religious minorities was easily maintained. There is a clear need to develop a greater appreciation of the effect of persecution upon an individual's behaviour and the role it played in motivating their willingness to become martyrs. Therefore, historians must develop a fuller understanding of the social, political *and* religious environment in which the martyr lived.

In the case of Lewis, both local and national dimensions to the political, social and religious climate in this period need to be considered. The increased anxiety over supposed Catholic conspiracies resulting from the allegations made by Oates and his associates in London were combined in Wales with the already unstable mix of political and religious conflict, which had been brewing over several years. As has been discussed previously in this thesis, the Marches of Wales were home to a sizeable Catholic community that had developed a close network of support through intermarriage and the successful integration of a number of Catholic and nominally conformist gentlemen within local government.[43]

The importance of this support network and the degree to which Catholics had gained positions of influence in parts of Wales is demonstrated by the Lewis family's history. Lewis was born to a nominally Protestant father, Morgan Lewis, and a Catholic mother, Margaret, in Abergavenny in 1616-17. His father had become the headmaster of Abergavenny Grammar School despite his overtly Catholic wife and

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[42] Ibid.

[43] For details of these intermarriages, see appendices A-G and I. Jenkins, "Anti-Popery on the Welsh Marches", pp. 278-9; M. McClain, "The Wentwood Forest riot: property rights and political culture in Restoration England", in S. D. Amussen and M. A. Kishlansky (eds) *Political culture and cultural politics in early modern England: Essays presented to David Underdown* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1995) pp. 118-127; M. McClain, *Beaufort: The Duke and his Duchess, 1657-1715* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2001) pp. 48-73.

extensive Catholic family network. Margaret was born into the Pritchard family, her brother being the Jesuit missionary, John Pritchard.[44] The Pritchard family's name appears frequently on the lists of Catholics drawn up in Monmouthshire in 1696 and 1706.[45] Margaret's mother had been a member of the Baker family, and the brother of the noted Welsh Benedictine Augustine Baker.[46]

The religious affiliations of David Lewis' immediate family indicate the degree to which the Catholic community of Monmouthshire and the Marches used outward conformity, in a pragmatic fashion, to ensure financial security and protection from the Protestant authorities. Unlike his eight siblings, David Lewis was raised as a Protestant, presumably mirroring his father's conformity during the public stage of his career.[47] The Lewis family's connections with the wider Catholic community were further enhanced by the marriage of David Lewis' sister, Mary, to Thomas Gunter, of the Catholic branch of the influential Abergavenny family.[48] Gunter maintained an attic chapel at his home in Cross Street, where Lewis and a number of other missionaries preached and performed Mass on a regular basis.[49] Clearly the Lewis family, with its wide familial connections to other Catholics in the region, and in its pragmatic approach to superficial conformity, was quite typical of the adaptive Catholic community of eastern Wales.

While Lewis' familial connections placed him firmly within the widespread Catholic community of the Marches, his religious career took him well beyond the confines of his native land. At the age of sixteen, while in Paris in the company of

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[44] NLW Martin Cleary Papers, MS 33.
[45] NLW Tredegar 7, MSS 93/52, 93/53-56, 93/58-59.
[46] NLW Martin Cleary Papers, MS 33. For details of Lewis' family connections, see the partial family tree of the Lewis, Pritchard and Gunter families in Appendix I.
[47] Ellis, *The Catholic Martyrs of Wales*, p. 130.
[48] NLW Martin Cleary Papers, MS 33. See the partial Gunter family tree in Appendix C.
[49] Trevor, *An Abstract Of Several Examinations*, pp. 4, 8-9.

Lord Rivers, Lewis converted to Catholicism. He returned to London in 1636 to continue his study of the law, before moving back to Abergavenny two years later. At this stage his father had also converted to Catholicism, reflecting the common pattern of allegiance observed by Jenkins that many men chose to return to the Roman Church as they approached the end of their lives.[50] After his parents' deaths in 1638, he returned to the Continent and began his instruction for the priesthood. He was sent back to Wales on the mission in 1647, but was quickly recalled to Rome to act as Confessor to the English College. However, the Welsh missionaries soon requested his presence, and he returned to Monmouthshire in 1648. He served as a missionary priest in South Wales for thirty-one years, and was Superior of the St. Francis Xavier Mission from 1667-1672 and again from 1674 until his death.[51]

Lewis' missionary endeavours in his native county may seem fairly typical of the experiences of many English and Welsh priests. However, it has been observed that in many Catholic communities across the British Isles, the priests that served them remained largely confined to interactions with the gentry, living in their homes, tutoring their children and benefitting from their protection.[52] In contrast, Lewis seems to have interacted with Catholics from a variety of social backgrounds. While he enjoyed the protection of the powerful Morgan family at Llantarnum, he appears to have resided in a small cottage adjoining the blacksmith's house in the village. He also travelled around the county, also performing Mass at his brother-in-law's chapel in Cross Street in Abergavenny, as well as at the home of Andrew and Edward

[50] Jenkins, "Anti-Popery on the Welsh Marches", p. 276.
[51] Ellis, *The Catholic Martyrs of Wales*, pp. 130-1.
[52] J. Bossy, 'The Character of Elizabethan Catholicism', *PP*, 21, 1962, pp. 51-2; J. Bossy, *The English Catholic Community, 1570-1850* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1975) pp. 126-7; C. Haigh, "From Monopoly to Minority: Catholicism in Early Modern England", *TRHS*, 31, 1981, pp. 132-3.

Williams.[53] He was widely reported to have been exceptionally charitable to the poor of Monmouthshire and was named "Tad y Tlodion" (Father of the Poor) by the county's impoverished Catholics.[54]

As well as developing a fuller understanding of the religious community he served as a priest for many years, it is also essential that the political and social context of his arrest, prosecution and execution are also considered. Despite the significant number of Catholics that attended the Masses that Lewis performed and his long residence and extensive travel within the county, there was no serious attempt to arrest him until the 1670s. At this point, significant levels of anti-Catholic were evident at both a local and national level. The escalating persecution of Catholics in Wales and the Marches between 1678 and 1681 reflected a complex interaction between local concerns and a national outcry at the perceived threat of Catholicism and the influence of Catholics in the royal court.[55]

As well as considering the religious culture and environment in which Lewis had been raised and had ministered, there is also a need to consider the political and socio-economic climate that led to his arrest, prosecution and death. While the religious culture of the martyrs undoubtedly contributed to their sense of vocation, the political and social conflicts that led to such deaths provide insight into the way in which both the state and the martyr's own community interpreted their behaviour. While anti-Catholicism was not a novel element in the politics and social relations of either South Wales, or the British Isles generally, the level of persecution that occurred

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[53] Trevor, *An Abstract Of Several Examinations Taken upon Oath*, pp. 4, 8-9. For photographs of the Gunter chapel and mansion in Cross Street, Abergavenny, see photographic plates 1-11.
[54] Ellis, *The Catholic Martyrs of Wales*, pp. 129-31; R. C. Allen, 'Lewis, David [St David Lewis; *alias* Charles Baker] (1617–1679)', *ODNB*, accessed at http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/1108, 27th April 2008.
[55] Rogers, *Memoirs of Monmouthshire*, pp. 71-85; N. Key and J. Ward, "'Divided into parties': Exclusion Crisis origins in Monmouth", *EHR*, 115, 464, 2000, p.1166.

on the Marches in the late 1670s had not been witnessed in the region for at least a generation. The exacerbation of the pre-existing tensions between Protestants and the large Catholic minority in Monmouthshire and Herefordshire was the result of the ongoing conflict between the Somersets and the opposing Protestant faction led by Sir Trevor Williams and John Arnold. Much of this discord focused on property rights in an area of Wentwood Forest known as the Chase. This volatile conflict over religion, politics and commercial interests, when combined with the outrage over Oates' and Bedloe's wild accusations in London, created a perfect storm of prejudice, fear and violence that left many men dead and devastated the mission over which Lewis presided.[56]

The government's decision to offer a reward of £20 for the arrest of any Catholic priest, along with the supplementary sum of £250 provided by John Arnold for the arrest of priests in Monmouthshire, suggest the level of concern in 1678 about the rise of Catholic power.[57] Many priests went on the run or were apprehended, some of whom would be executed, while others would die in their prison cells after months of captivity.[58] Lewis was sheltered for a period of time by the Catholic community, but was eventually arrested as he was preparing to perform Mass at Llantarnum on 17th November, 1678. He was then transported to Abergavenny, before being committed to Monmouth Gaol. He was subsequently transported to Usk prison, before being

[56] McClain, "The Wentwood Forest riot", pp. 116-9; McClain, *Beaufort*, pp. 126-33.
[57] Ellis, *The Catholic Martyrs of Wales*, p. 132; One estimation of the contemporary value of a £20 fine using the RPI, places it at the equivalent of £2550 by 2012 values. For details see http://www.measuringworth.com/ukcompare/result.php?year_source=1678&amount=20&year_result=2012, accessed on 9th Oct 2013. One estimation of the contemporary value of a £250 fine using the RPI, places it at the equivalent of £31,840 by 2012 values. For details see http://www.measuringworth.com/ukcompare/result.php?year_source=1678&amount=250&year_result=2012 accessed on 9th Oct 2013.
[58] Lewis, *A Narrative of the Imprisonment and Tryal of Mr. David Lewis*, p. 3; Anon., *A Short Memorandum on the Deaths of Mr Philip Evans and Mr John Lloyd, Both Priest* (London, 1679); J. D., *A True Narrative of that Grand Jesuite Father Andrews*, (London, 1679).

returned to Monmouth to face trial at the assizes.[59] At his trial, he was condemned under the act of 27 Elizabeth as a traitor.[60] The next day, he was sentenced to be hanged, drawn and quartered, but was reprieved under the condition that he provided information about the Popish Plot to the Privy Council.[61] Lewis was taken to London and interrogated by Oates, Bedloe and Dugdale, and was told by Lord Shaftesbury that he could save himself if he provided evidence about the plot or by converting.[62] Lewis refused to convert and was unable to provide any information about the plot, and so was returned to Usk. He remained in prison for another three months, before being taken to his execution on 27th August.[63]

Lewis' death should not be simply seen as the result of one man's desire to witness for his faith. While he did refuse to convert and save himself, his persecution was part of a far wider political and religious conflict within his local community, and at a national level. Lewis' arrest, like the other prosecutions and detentions that occurred in the period of 1678-1681, were undoubtedly the result of the long-standing religious tensions in this region of Wales, but also provided a useful tool in the Protestant gentry's conflict with Worcester.[64] The Somerset family connection with the Jesuits' activities in South Wales provided useful ammunition for the Protestant gentry, who wished to re-establish their political independence, enjoyed during previous decades.[65] This deeper understanding of the political and religious background of Lewis' martyrdom provides a new awareness of the differences

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[59] Lewis, *A Narrative of the Imprisonment and Tryal of Mr. David Lewis*, pp. 2-3.
[60] Ibid, p. 3.
[61] Ibid, p. 8.
[62] Ellis, *The Catholic Martyrs of Wales*, pp. 133-6.
[63] St. David Lewis, *A Narrative of the Imprisonment and Tryal of Mr. David Lewis, Priest of the Society of Jesus* (London, 1679) pp. 1-8; Ellis, *The Catholic Martyrs of Wales*, pp. 133-6; 'Lewis, David [St David Lewis; *alias* Charles Baker] (1617–1679)', *ODNB*, accessed at http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/1108, 27th April 2008.
[64] Anon., *The Condemnation of the Cheating Popish Priest*; Anon., *A Letter From a Gentleman in the Country*; Croft, *A Short Narrative Of the Discovery of a College of Jesuits.*
[65] McClain, "The Wentwood Forest riot", p. 122.

between the martyrs of the sixteenth century and those who died a century later. There is a need to balance Gregory's emphasis of martyrdom as the product of devout faith, with a wider analysis of the particular religious and political circumstance that could lead to such an extreme expression of devotion.[66]

Some of the most recent research in this field has been characterised by its rejection of social scientific theories as a means of studying martyrdom. Some of the studies that did propose an interdisciplinary approach have invited criticism by their use of psychological theories to explain why individuals were prepared to be martyred. Other have sought to analyse how martyrs dealt with the interrogation, torture and painful deaths they endured. In order to understand why an individual would be prepared to engage in such apparently counter-intuitive behaviour some psychohistorians and psychotherapists have applied psychoanalytical theories for this purpose.[67] Such an approach focuses on the martyr's individual actions and the choices that led to his or her death, rather than on the social and cultural context surrounding those choices and behaviours. There is also an assumption made that the martyr's decision not to avoid certain death, despite being given the opportunity to do so, results from some underlying psychic disturbance.

Both Byman and Bradford took this approach in their analysis of early modern and ancient martyrs. Byman's analysis focused on the experiences of the Marian Protestant martyrs, concentrating on the accounts of their lives and executions provided in Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*.[68] Byman suggested that they 'devised a compulsive ritual that they performed in meticulous detail' despite their condemnation

[66] Gregory, *Salvation at Stake*, p. 8.
[67] Byman, "Ritualistic Acts and Compulsive Behavior", pp. 625-643; Bradford, "Early Christian Martyrdom", pp. 30-42.
[68] Byman, "Ritualistic Acts and Compulsive Behavior", pp. 628-630.

of similar Catholic practices.[69] He argues that such rituals, performed during imprisonment and immediately before execution, acted as a means of relieving their anxiety and the 'inner perturbations caused by their fear of martyrdom'.[70] Byman employs Erik Erikson's suggestion that this kind of pathological behaviour resulted from 'the weight of excessive guilt', arising from the inability of the individual to resolve the subconscious conflicts produced by aggressive impulses.[71] Byman argues that rather than normal, adaptive behaviour, these rituals were pathological in both their source and pattern. Explaining that ritualistic behaviour provides an initial escape from anxiety, Byman suggests that this original anxiety is replaced by a new anxiety over the performance of the rituals, with punishments being meted out for failure to perform them correctly, rather than failure to avoid the original forbidden act.[72] He also interprets the complex distinctions between suicide and martyrdom described by the prospective martyrs and their vehement denial of any suicidal feelings in their examinations, as evidence of their underlying concern about their true motivations.[73]

Bradford adopts a different psychoanalytical approach, suggesting the martyr has exchanged his or her familial relationships for a community of fellow believers and a special relationship with a divine father.[74] Bradford uses the theories of both Eriksen and Jung to analyse martyrdom in antiquity. He concludes that the martyr conceives of the Church in female terms, as a mother, or as a bride of God, who gives birth to the martyr into an eternal life, while those who deny their faith out of fear of death are miscarried. This maternal vision of the Church is combined with the image

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[69] Ibid, pp. 625.
[70] Ibid, p. 625.
[71] Ibid, p. 626.
[72] Ibid, pp. 626-7.
[73] Ibid, p. 624.
[74] Bradford, "Early Christian Martyrdom", p. 31.

of God as father, which is reinforced by the paternalistic structures of the Church, allowing the martyr to 'recall the psychoanalytic familial romance'.[75] In his Jungian interpretation, Bradford suggests that the martyrs created a feminised personification of the Church. The negative aspects of the maternal archetype are rejected in favour of a divine, positive one, who enables access to the spiritual nurturance provided by God, the heavenly father.[76]

Both Byman and Bradford make useful points about the importance of ritual in the lives of martyrs and how the fellowship shared between members of religious groups can become almost familial in nature.[77] However, their use of psychoanalysis as an explanatory tool fails to provide answers to many questions. Both studies posit a number of dubious assertions that are based on a series of theoretical assumptions. Firstly, both have assumed that the martyr's behaviour is the result of some undiagnosed disorder rather than the actions of a rational individual placed in an impossible position. Secondly, the identification of martyrs as suffering from obsessive-compulsive disorders or an unresolved Oedipus complex is questionable, given the relatively scant information available when compared to the extensive, in-depth interviews required in the psychoanalysis of modern-day clients. It would seem that such statements about the psychological states of early modern martyrs are little more than labels applied to "unexplainable" behaviour and provide little guidance for the historian.

As a result of these shortcomings, much criticism has been made of implication that martyrdom is the manifestation of an undiagnosed psychological disorder. Gregory has provided one of the most vigorous criticisms of this approach and goes

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[75] Bradford, "Early Christian Martyrdom", p. 31.
[76] Ibid, pp. 31-32.
[77] Ibid; Byman, "Ritualistic Acts and Compulsive Behavior", pp. 628-630.

further, rejecting the application of psychology generally as a means of examining martyrdom.[78] He argues that psychological theories, like others drawn from the social sciences, reduce 'spiritual realities' to the effects of symbols.[79] Such views cannot take account of early modern religious beliefs, 'none of which terminated in a "symbolic order" or a "system of symbols"'.[80] For early modern martyrs, the concepts of God, Satan, sin, grace, heaven and hell were 'by no means part of a merely "symbolic" realm – as opposed to the domain of the "real" or "material"'.[81] Gregory suggests that because they were 'divinely revealed realities', they were more real than the temporal aspects of their lives.[82] As a result, he rejects the description of the religious and the spiritual as symbolic, and its subsequent comparison with the real and the material.

Gregory also criticises the treatment of martyrdom as suicide by some psychohistorians. He suggests that 'almost no evidence could be employed to argue that early modern martyrs were insane'.[83] However, this would appear to contradict the evidence collected by other historians who have argued that some martyrs were showing mental disturbance in the lead up to their executions, while those that were merely imprisoned bore the psychological scars many years later. Furthermore, Gregory argues that the opinions of the martyrs themselves that they were acting out of faith, adequately refutes any suggestion that some martyrs were suicidal. This seems to take little account of the fact that suicide was taboo in early modern society, making it unlikely that martyrs would have admitted to any desire to die. Explanations of martyrdom as suicide are more fully refuted by the fact that a willingness to die for a deeply held cause is not consistently judged to be suicidal in nature. Soldiers,

[78] Gregory, *Salvation at Stake*, pp. 10.
[79] Ibid.
[80] Ibid.
[81] Ibid.
[82] Ibid.
[83] Ibid, p. 101.

political activists and those who risk their lives to save another are not viewed to be suicidal. It would seem as appropriate to apply to religious martyrs the view that individuals can willingly accept death as part of their commitment to a cause or creed without inference of suicidal intentions.

While Gregory makes some very important points about the assumptions that have dominated psychohistorians' analysis of martyrdom, his discussion of psychology generally betrays unfamiliarity with the key ideas of the discipline. He uses terms such as 'insanity', 'madness' and 'raving lunatics', which are wholly inappropriate in a serious discussion of the psychology of martyrdom.[84] He also assumes that the application of psychology to this area of early modern history would be limited to the examination of mental illness. However, psychology can aid investigations of early modern martyrdom in other ways, most of which have been consistently overlooked by historians.

The case of St. David Lewis provides an example of martyrdom, which would benefit significantly from a psychologically informed approach. The account of his arrest, imprisonment and trial, left by Lewis, and the speech he gave on the scaffold, provide important autobiographical information as to how this priest approached his martyrdom and prepared himself psychologically for his impending death. In his account, Lewis demonstrated real concern to refute the allegations made in his trial, in the press, and by his Monmouth gaoler, against his character and conduct.[85] It was alleged that Lewis had attempted to poison his gaoler during his imprisonment in Usk, prior to the start of his trial. However, in his account, Lewis describes how the drunken gaoler at Monmouth had demanded that Lewis drink with him, despite the man having

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[84] Ibid.

[85] Lewis, *A Narrative of the Imprisonment and Tryal of Mr. David Lewis*, p. 2, 4-5, 7; Anon., *The Condemnation of the Cheating Popish Priest*; Anon., *A Letter From a Gentleman in the Country*; Croft, *A Short Narrative Of the Discovery of a College of Jesuits*; Lee, *Cæsar Borgia*, p. 70.

already consumed a considerable amount of alcohol. When, later that evening, the gaoler's body began to swell as a result of the effects of his over-consumption, his wife accused the priest of poisoning her husband.[86] At his trial, Lewis was accused by a former servant of taking 'eight Pounds in Silver, and one piece of Gold' for freeing her father's soul from Purgatory.[87] A similar accusation was made in a printed pamphlet that appeared shortly after Lewis' arrest. The bishop of Hereford, Herbert Croft, produced a pamphlet account very similar to the story recounted by Lewis' former servant. This was appended to his narrative of his raid on the Jesuit base at the Cwm. It was alleged in this document, that Lewis, as confessor to a poor woman whose father had died six months earlier, took £30 from her to free her father's soul from Purgatory. When the woman could not pay the sum, it was stated that Lewis threatened her with excommunication and with the bailiffs. A final agreement was reached that she would pay the sum back in instalments, but if she forfeited on any of the payments she would be thrown into prison.[88]

These allegations were serious assaults on Lewis' character and on his relationships with his parishioners. Lewis' account of his arrest, trial and imprisonment betray a clear anxiety over the accusations that are being made against him. In his description of his imprisonment, Lewis was concerned to dispel the rumours that were circulating that he had poisoned his gaoler and escaped from prison.[89] In the courthouse, Lewis again showed his distress over the aspersions being cast on his character in his attempts to dismiss the accusations made by his former servant, Dorothy James. Lewis vehemently denied the charges of defrauding her of money, producing three witnesses to support his claims that Dorothy James and her husband

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[86] Lewis, *A Narrative of the Imprisonment and Tryal of Mr. David Lewis*, p. 2.
[87] Ibid, p. 4.
[88] Croft, *A Short Narrative Of the Discovery of a College of Jesuits,* pp. 11-15.
[89] Lewis, *A Narrative of the Imprisonment and Tryal of Mr. David Lewis*, p. 2.

had a long-standing grudge against him. This dispute between employer and former employees had escalated with the couple bringing a chancery suit against Lewis and Dorothy James stating that she wished to 'wash her hands in his blood and make pottage of his head'.[90]

After addressing the allegations made by the prosecution's witnesses, Lewis was also concerned to refute 'a foul Aspersion' made in Croft's pamphlet.[91] Lewis described allegations, as entirely erroneous, that he had taken a considerable amount of money from a poor woman, and that he had been hiding, 'cunningly contriv'd', under a clay floor of a cottage when he was discovered by a JP. Lewis alleges that even the judge at his trial conceded that 'I, for my part, do not believe it to be true'. [92]

Lewis' account of his trial also seems to make implied accusations of hypocrisy against those who sought to condemn him. From his arrest to his trial the unfairness, vindictiveness and greed of his pursuers and captors seems consistently in evidence. While Lewis was treated in a relatively civil manner by his captors for most of the time, it would seem that John Arnold could not resist any opportunity to make his anti-Catholic beliefs clear. Lewis claimed that at his initial interrogation by Arnold, along with Thomas Lewis, Charles Price and William Jones, the recorder of Abergavenny, he was asked whether he knew anything of 'the late Horrid plot'. Lewis swore on his oath that he knew nothing, eliciting the response from Arnold 'that with us it was no Oath to swear on their Bibles'.[93] Similarly, after spending the night at Arnold's house before transportation to Monmouth Gaol, Lewis was asked by Arnold whether he wished to see his "Baby", a mock shrine to the pope that Arnold had erected in his

[90] Ibid, pp. 6-7.
[91] Ibid, p. 7.
[92] Ibid, p. 7.
[93] Ibid, p. 1.

living-room.[94] It would seem that Arnold was barely able to contain his anti-Catholic disdain for the priest that he had apprehended.

Lewis also alleged that his captors' motivation in pursuing priests was as much financial as ideological. While he was being transferred from Monmouth prison to Usk, Lewis was informed that one of his colleagues and 'a very good Friend', Ignatius Price, was lying dying nearby.[95] He reveals that Price had been hounded across the countryside by his own kinsmen, Charles Price.[96] On his arrival at Usk, Lewis was informed that Ignatius Price had died and had been buried at Raglan. When informed that the priest's grave had been discovered, Charles Price ordered it opened, ostensibly to check that the corpse in the grave was that of his cousin. However, Lewis states that this was not the case, and that Charles Price actually wished to steal a large gold cross that had been buried with the priest.[97] Accusations that some of the county's priest-hunters and those that directed them were mercenary do not seem to be purely the product of Lewis' imagination given the role of the politico-economic conflict raging over access to Wentwood Chase in the outbreak of hostilities.[98]

Lewis did not simply seek to refute the aspersions cast on his character, but also drew attention to what he held to be irregularities in the trial proceedings. The men responsible for arresting Lewis, John Arnold, a local gentleman and JP, and Charles Price, a local priest-hunter, objected to the jury that had been called. They had the judge reject them on the basis that they were likely to treat Lewis favourably and were unlikely to convict him.[99] Lewis points out that a similar ploy had been attempted at a previous trial in the region. That trial had been to decide on the dispute between

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[94] Ibid, p. 2.
[95] Ibid, p. 3.
[96] Ibid, p.7.
[97] Ibid, Ellis, *The Catholic Martyrs of Wales*, p. 113.
[98] Rogers, *Memories of Monmouthshire*, pp 69-70; 80-83.
[99] Lewis, *A Narrative of the Imprisonment and Tryal of Mr. David Lewis*, pp. 3-4.

the marquis of Worcester and the tenants of Wentwood Chase.[100] The same judge had sat and had stated that such objections to the jury were 'ridiculous, and not usual to carry out of a Grand-Jury'.[101]

Lewis also notes in his account the dubious practice of allowing Arnold, who was leading the prosecution, to sit at the Bench with the judge, to whom he was related. Lewis alleges that this allowed Arnold to influence proceedings throughout the trial.[102] His accusation that his trial was unfair and poorly supervised by the judge does seem to be born our by the unreliability of many of the witnesses called by the prosecution, with one appearing to have perjured himself on the stand. William Price swore to the jury that he had witnessed Lewis perform Mass at Castlemorton in Worcestershire. However, Lewis alleges that that morning Price had been brought to his cell where he had not been able to identify Lewis as the man he had seen, and described a man of considerably different appearance. This was witnessed by two people who testified to what they had seen in the court.[103] Despite his failure to identify Lewis as the priest he had seen, Price provided testimony in the court, perjuring himself in a capital case. Similarly, the James' were well known in the local area as having a grudge against their former employer. The fact that Dorothy James seemed to have such a violent hatred towards Lewis raises questions of authenticity regarding her story of how he swindled her, suggesting it was an invention for pure malice.[104] Another witness called by the prosecution was Maen Trot, who testified that Lewis had read Mass and had presided at the marriage of Thomas Gunter's daughter.[105] However, Trot was in the employ of John Arnold, and seems to have been the man of short stature that was

[100] Ibid, p. 3.
[101] Ibid.
[102] Ibid, pp. 3-4.
[103] Ibid, p. 4, 7-8.
[104] Ibid, p. 6-7.
[105] Ibid, p. 5.

identified as leading a mock parade through Abergavenny during a pope-burning in 1679.[106] Furthermore, Lewis alleges that Trot's financial circumstances had been much reduced and that he 'lives upon the Charity of Gentlemen and Friends for his Bread'. In these straightened conditions, Lewis argues that Trot had testified out of 'Poverty and hope of Gain'[107]. Lewis' fervent denials of any attempts to exploit his parishioners and concern to maintain his identity as an 'honest Man amongst all honest Gentlemen and Neighbours', seem to have been constructed against the bigotry and greed of his persecutors.[108]

The concern Lewis showed in defending himself from the personal attacks that were made against him, contrasts with the degree to which Lewis had to distance himself from his identity as a priest.[109] His defence against the charge of treasonously being ordained a priest and returning to his native land, revolved around the need for the court to prove that he had actually been ordained in a foreign seminary.[110] Implicitly, Lewis denied his priesthood and portrayed himself as simply an individual who had performed the Catholic Mass. Such a denial of his priestly identity could be interpreted as evidence of the mental reservation and equivocation taught as part of the casuistic philosophy of the Jesuits. The development of a 'culture of camouflage' by Catholics has begun to be explored by historians, and has raised some interesting points about the nature of British as opposed to European Catholic culture, and the effect of the constant need of priests and the laity to lie and deceive in order to maintain their religious networks in the face of a suspicious Protestant state.[111] Mullett has

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[106] Anon., *The Popes Down-fall at Abergavenny, or A true and perfect Relation of his being carried through the Fair in a solemn Procession with very great Ceremony* (London, 1679) p. 3.
[107] Lewis, *A Narrative of the Imprisonment and Tryal of Mr. David Lewis*, p. 6.
[108] Ibid, p. 7.
[109] Ibid,
[110] Ibid, p. 5.
[111] M. A. Mullett, '"This Irreligious Art of Liing": Strategies of Disguise in Post-Reformation English Catholicism', *JHS*, 20, 3, 2001, p. 329.

argued that the culture 'had a pervasive impact on Catholic mentalities, creating a collective, if partly unconscious, self-perception of criminality and also giving rise to habits of internally legitimated mendacity.'[112] The need to hide their religious allegiance affected all Catholics, both laity and clergy. The increasing pressure placed on Catholics during the course of the sixteenth century, produced a situation where the faithful of the Roman Church were criminalised for their religious allegiances, their refusal to attend public, Protestant worship and for their harbouring of priests. Similarly, those Catholic men that chose to follow their vocation were turned into traitors by the Elizabethan statutes prohibiting their return to their homelands as missionaries. In order to continue to maintain their faith and religious practices, the Catholics of the British Isles had to engage in dissimulation of some kind, presenting one image to their Protestant neighbours and the authorities, while hiding their true faith.

The need to protect their identities and hide from the Protestant authorities became a dominant factor in the lives of the missionary priests who began arriving in Britain in the 1580s. Priests used equivocation and mental reservation to mislead their pursuers as to their identities and their purpose in the country.[113] Many philosophers and scholars had condemned lying as immoral, and the misrepresentation employed by the missionary priesthood seemed to have place them in a morally ambiguous situation. However, the emergence of casuist moral theology allowed for the use of equivocation and mental reservation as acceptable means of twisting the truth. Mental reservation refers to the uttering of false statements, which could be completed by a further statement withheld or reserved in the mind of the speaker. Equivocation was

[112] Ibid,
[113] P. Zagorin, *Ways of Lying: Dissimulation, Persecution, and Conformity in Early Modern Europe*, (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1990), p. 134.

the use of statements with a double meaning, which could signify different things to the speaker than to the listener. Mental reservation had existed as a doctrine since the fourteenth century, but was fully expounded by the sixteenth-century Catholic theologian Martin de Azpilcueta. During his time as a seminarian in Rome at the English College, Lewis would have been trained in the art of reservation an equivocation as part of his preparation for missionary work in hostile territory. Such training employed the work of Azpilcueta, and instructed seminarians through cases and circumstances where dissimulation could be employed.[114] Mullett suggests that the culture of disguise, aliases and dissimulation that was cultivated by the Elizabethan and Jacobean missionaries, particularly the Jesuits, became so much a part of life that priests continued to don disguises when venturing out even in the mid-eighteenth century despite a more tolerant attitude from the government.[115]

Lewis' implicit denial of his priesthood can be seen as an example of this kind of traditional Catholic dissimulation as a means of escaping conviction. However, it undoubtedly had a psychological effect upon him. In denying his vocation, Lewis was distancing himself from a fundamental part of his identity and his *raison d'être* of the last 30 years. When we combine this denial of his ordination with his fervent desire throughout his writings to vindicate himself from accusations of treachery, malice and hypocrisy, a picture of Lewis as a man clinging to an ever eroding sense of his own personal identity emerges.[116] During the course of his arrest, imprisonment and trial, Lewis' personal identity, carefully constructed over 63 years, was gradually stripped away. From the outset, Lewis was belittled by his captors. Arnold referred to him as 'the pretended Bishop of Llandaff', a name that was given to him again in mocking

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[114] T. Slater, "Mental Reservation", *Catholic Encyclopaedia*, accessed http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10195b.htm, 22nd May 2012.
[115] Mullett, "'This Irreligious Art of Liing'", p. 337-8.
[116] Lewis, *A Narrative of the Imprisonment and Tryal of Mr. David Lewis*, pp.3-8

and malicious pamphlets published around the time of his trial.[117] The use of the term "pretended" was not unique to the attacks on priests like David Lewis. The designation of individuals or whole communities as falsely laying claim to a particular religious status appears to have become part of the discourse of attack that proliferated in the closing decades of the seventeenth century. Both Catholics and Protestants accused those who opposed them of being pretenders.[118] However, its effect upon Lewis was personal in nature. Lewis' identity as an altruistic gentleman who had helped fellow Catholics for over 30 years was further eroded by his being prevented from aiding his friend and colleague, Fr Ignatius Price, on his deathbed.[119] Instead of being able to comfort the man and perform the last rites, Lewis was only able to offer his 'most true and best Wishes for his Souls happy passage out of this turbulent World, to an Eternity of Rest'.[120]

During the course of his trial, Lewis' identity, as an honest and honourable gentleman, was further challenged by the accusations of hypocrisy and stealing made against him. The accuracy of his religious guidance was also called into question, with accusations that he encouraged Catholics to believe in superstitious practices and exploited their credulity. The fact that he was taken to London and was accused by Oates and Bedloe of involvement in the fictitious plot they had concocted was a further assault on Lewis' honesty and integrity. Even after his trial had concluded, Lewis continued to be subjected to deeply personal attacks in the press and also in one play performed in London.[121] He was accused of having poor personal hygiene, and of

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[117] Ibid, p. 1; Croft, *A Short Narrative Of the Discovery of a College of Jesuits*, p. 11; Anon., *The Condemnation of the Cheating Popish Priest*, p. 1.
[118] In France, the edicts of Louis XIV labelled the Huguenot as 'the pretended Reformed Religion'; Louis XIV, *An Edict of the French King, Prohibiting all Publick Exercise of then Pretended Reformed Religion in his Kingdom* (London, 1686) f. A1.
[119] Lewis, *A Narrative of the Imprisonment and Tryal of Mr. David Lewis*, p. 3
[120] Lewis, *A Narrative of the Imprisonment and Tryal of Mr. David Lewis*, p. 3.
[121] Anon., *A Letter From a Gentleman in the Country*; Lee, *Cæsar Borgia*, p.70.

drunkenness, of false prophecy and cowardice.[122] In a play performed shortly after Lewis' conviction, Nathaniel Lee accused him of 'lurking in holes', while suggesting that the entire Jesuit order gave 'Whores the Extreme Unction' in return for gold.[123] In Lewis' account of his trial, the reader is not only witnessing his attempts to defend his life, but also to defend his identity as an honest gentleman, which was being seriously eroded.

This concern over the rumours being spread about his personal conduct and identity in the account he produced during his imprisonment, contrasts markedly with the lack of concern shown in his last speech from the scaffold in Usk.[124] In his final sermon to the crowd that gathered to witness his execution, a rather different image emerged from the one that appears in his earlier writing. While Lewis did acknowledge and discuss the defamation of his character, it was not the focus of his sermon. Instead he chose to concentrate on embracing his social identity as a martyr and a Catholic, two aspects of his self-image that he denied in his courtroom defence. Lewis declared to the crowd 'a Roman Catholick I am, a Roman Catholick Priest I am, a Roman Catholick Priest of that Religious Order called the Society of Jesus I am'.[125] He asserted that his conviction was for 'reading Mass, hearing Confessions, Administering the Sacraments, Annointing the Sick, Christening, Marrying, Preaching', and not for plotting against the King and state.[126] This explicit pronouncement of his Catholicism and vocation contrasted markedly with the implicit denial that he had made a few months earlier in his trial. His identity as a martyr was clearly apparent in his statement to the crowd that 'I dye for Conscience and Religion;

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[122] Anon., *A Letter From a Gentleman in the Country*, p. 2
[123] Lee, *Cæsar Borgia*, p.70.
[124] NLW MS Baker-Gabb, 703; Lewis, *A Narrative of the Imprisonment and Tryal of Mr. David Lewis*, pp. 9-12.
[125] NLW Baker-Gabb, MS 703
[126] Ibid.

and dying upon such good scores, as far as humane frailty permits, I dye with Alacrity Interior and Exterior'.[127]

The importance of Lewis' social identity as a Catholic, a priest and a martyr is demonstrated by his choice of text as the basis for his sermon. He preached from 1 Peter, 4:15-16 - 'But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or a railer, or a coveter of other men's things. But if as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name.'[128] Its explicit references to persecution and martyrdom were extremely pertinent to the situation of both Lewis and the Catholics that came to witness his death. It reassured the faithful that those who suffer in the name of their religion were blessed in the eyes of God, a highly appropriate sentiment when the Catholics of Wales and the Marches were coming under increasing pressure from the Protestant authorities. The Bible provides very clear examples of martyrdom and the blessings that martyrs might receive from God. The Old Testament contains many stories of men prepared to suffer death for their faith. For example, Daniel was sent to die in a lion's den, and Shadrach, Mishach and Abednego were to be burnt alive in a furnace because of their refusal to reject their faith.[129] In the New Testament, the martyrdom of so many of the Apostles provided Catholics with further evidence of the martyr's status in the eyes of God.

Consideration of the whole of Peter's first epistle provides new insight into the religious message that Lewis was attempting to broadcast to those assembled at his execution. It also suggests an explanation for the way in which he had come to terms with his own imminent death. 1 Peter addresses the dispersed Christian populations

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[127] Ibid.
[128] First Epistle of Peter, 4:15-16 Douai-Rheims Bible, http://www.drbo.org/chapter/67005.htm, accessed 30th July 2010.
[129] Book of Daniel, 3, Douai-Rheims Bible, http://www.drbo.org/chapter/32002.htm, accessed 1st Oct 2013.

of 'Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia'.[130] These people, suffering persecution by their non-Christian neighbours, were offered advice and support by St Peter as to how to live under the oppressive attentions of the Gentiles. It exhorted them to live exemplary Christian lives, so as to convert their persecutors through their love and forgiveness. It reinforced the belief that suffering for their faith was an honourable, blessed and holy experience.[131]

Facing a grisly death for obeying his conscience and following his vocation, Lewis would have been faced with much the same predicament as the Christians of Asia Minor, and St Peter's advice would have seemed remarkably pertinent. This epistle encourages the recipient to see persecution and martyrdom not as a negative experience, but rather as a positive one. It reminds the reader of the glories that await believers, and of the need to show love and forgiveness in the face of abuse. The recipient is told that 'the trial of your faith... may be found unto praise and glory and honour at the appearing of Jesus Christ'.[132] Furthermore, the Christians of Asia Minor are reassured of their importance in God's eyes as 'a chosen generation, a kingly priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people'. They are reminded to maintain their commitment to Christian values and morals even towards those that would harm them - 'honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king'.[133] In doing so they will provide an example that will convert those who fear and resent them, turning what seems like a wholly negative situation, into an opportunity to bring more people into the Church. In a powerful statement of the potency of model Christian behaviour,

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[130] First Epistle of Peter, 4:15-16 Douai-Rheims Bible, http://www.drbo.org/chapter/67005.htm, accessed 30th July 2010.
[131] Ibid.
[132] First Epistle of Peter, 1:7, Douai-Rheims Bible, http://www.drbo.org/chapter/67001.htm, accessed 1st Oct 2013.
[133] First Epistle of Peter, 2:9, Douai-Rheims Bible, http://www.drbo.org/chapter/67002.htm, accessed 1st Oct 2013.

the apostle informs his readers that 'for so is the will of God, that by doing well you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men'.[134]

These themes of courage in the face of adversity, the blessing of martyrdom and the power of Christian love and forgiveness, are clearly manifest in Lewis' final speech to the crowd. Just as Peter had observed that 'all flesh is as grass', but the gospel was incorruptible, Lewis recognised that his physical life would be fleeting.[135] His trial had demonstrated that even his reputation as an honourable man could be easily tainted and sullied by others. His attempts to defend himself against these accusations in court had not stemmed the tide of vitriol directed against him from the press and stage. However, Peter's first epistle offered clear solace to Lewis in the face of this personal attack. The apostle advised that those facing persecution would be ridiculed and spoken ill of, and exhorted them to 'be not afraid of their [the persecutor's] fear, and be not troubled'.[136] Lewis also exhorted the crowd to resist the temptation to demand 'Tooth for tooth Eie for Eie blood for blood life for life', and instead follow the teachings of the Gospel, that forgiveness and love should even be shown to the worst of enemies.[137] In his epistle, Peter describes the powerful and important consequences of this Christian fortitude, as those who are persecuted can turn their suffering into an opportunity to witness to others. The reader is told 'if any man speak, let him speak, as the words of God. If any man minister, let him do it, as of the power, which God administereth'.[138] Lewis also incorporated this message into

[134] First Epistle of Peter, 4:15-16, Douai-Rheims Bible, http://www.drbo.org/chapter/67005.htm, accessed 30th July 2010.
[135] Ibid; NLW Baker-Gabb, MS 703.
[136] First Epistle of Peter, 3:14, Douai-Rheims Bible, http://www.drbo.org/chapter/67005.htm, accessed 30th July 2010.
[137] NLW Baker-Gabb, MS 703.
[138] First Epistle of Peter, 4:11, Douai-Reims Bible, http://www.drbo.org/chapter/67004.htm, accessed 1st Oct 2013.

his sermon when he calls for the Catholic community to show forgiveness towards their persecutors.[139]

Lewis' requests for absolution for his own sins, and forgiveness for those who had wronged him were very much in the tradition of last speeches delivered by priests from the scaffold. Covington has highlighted the degree to which the behaviour of Jesuit priests, in the hours and minutes before their deaths, reflected the teachings of St Ignatius Loyola, which were promoted so earnestly in the Continental seminaries established by the Society of Jesus.[140] In his *Spiritual Exercises*, Loyola had laid down clear instructions and guidance for his priestly followers as to how to cope with spiritual and physical torment. The need for constant spiritual self-examination and discussion of the results of this self-analysis could be adapted to the needs of those priests that found themselves imprisoned and facing death. They were encouraged to examine their consciences and motives, and often used the scaffold as a place to articulate their conclusions.[141] Similarly, a request for forgiveness and absolution as death approached was a fundamental part of receiving the last sacrament of the Church in preparation to enter the next life. Absolution was often granted by a fellow priest, who was either dying alongside his colleague or had secreted himself in the crowd.[142] Some priests had prearranged signs to demonstrate their request for ultimate forgiveness, while others, like Lewis, requested it explicitly in their final address to the crowd.[143]

It could be argued that such requests for and offers of forgiveness followed the models of behaviour that had become established at public executions in general and

[139] NLW Baker-Gabb, MS 703.
[140] Covington, "'Consolation on Golgotha'", p. 274.
[141] Ibid, pp. 275-7, 290-2
[142] Ibid, p. 283.
[143] Ibid, pp. 290-2.

the execution of priests specifically. Historians have noted the degree to which the public execution involved elements of theatrical ritual and performance.[144] Clergymen and hangmen both played important roles in the theatre of justice that was being performed on the scaffold, while the crowd of spectators and even the condemned were also subject to certain expectations.[145] The execution of Catholic priests under the Elizabethan and Stuart regimes have also been seen as theatrical in nature. The public, punitive motivation for the trial and execution of priests meant that the gallows came to act as important arenas where Catholics could contest the state's labelling of the condemned as martyrs, asserting their own view that such men were martyrs. In executions cases other than those of priests, the privilege to make a speech on the scaffold that was afforded to prisoners, revolved around expectations of contrition and confession on the part of the prisoner.[146] However, for priests condemned as traitors the ritual of last dying speeches differed in key important ways. It was expected that the last speeches of Catholics, like other condemned criminals, would be religious in nature. Some Protestant observers were disturbed by the level of open discussion of the faith Catholic priests were allowed before they died.[147] Furthermore, even 'the smallest outward gesture' of priests on the scaffold were scrutinised by observers from both sides of the confessional divide to suggest that their religiously motivated interpretation of the execution was correct.[148] For Catholics, the men being executed were martyrs. The verbal and body language of priests at their executions were meant to assert this over the accusations of the state that they were traitors.[149]

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[144] Covington describes martyrdom as a lonely undertaking, but also suggested that it could be a 'theatrical experience'. Ibid, p. 270.
[145] J. A. Sharpe, '"Last Dying Speeches": Religion, Ideology and Public Execution in Seventeenth-Century England', *PP*, 107, 1985, pp. 150-59.
[146] Ibid, pp. 157-9.
[147] P. Lake and M. Questier, "Agency, Approbation and Rhetoric under the Gallows: Puritans, Romanists and the State in Early Modern England", *PP*, 153, 1996, pp. 74-5.
[148] Ibid, p. 75.
[149] Ibid.

To suggest that there was a ritualised element to the declarations and behaviour of priests on the scaffold, is not to insinuate that there was any element of insincerity in their actions. In challenging their denigration as traitors, priests acted and spoke in a manner that reflected their genuine conviction that they were being executed for their faith. Viewing the scaffold as a public space in which the state, the condemned and the crowd all played key roles, highlights the layers of social meaning that surrounded these surprisingly ambiguous events.

However, as well as considering executions as collective experiences onto which different social groups sought to impose their own interpretation, there is also a need to understand the individual psychology that drove men and women to witness for their faith in such an extreme manner. The gruesome nature of hanging, drawing and quartering would have undoubtedly inspired terror in those who were condemned to die in such a way. It is widely known from their own writings that many martyrs from all denominations felt genuine physical fear at the prospect of an excruciating death.[150] However, despite some recoiling from the pain of their executions, few recantations were noted amongst early modern martyrs during their executions.[151] In order to achieve this, martyrs must have prepared themselves psychologically for what they would have to endure.

For Jesuits, like St David Lewis, their education had provided them with specific psychological mechanisms that could be applied to every aspect of their life, including their preparations for death. The kind of mental preparation and discipline that Loyola expounded in the *Spiritual Exercises* and the rituals that were performed at death in accordance with the teachings of the Church were crucial parts of this

[150] Covington, *The Trail of Martyrdom*, pp. 2, 181.
[151] Ibid, p. 192.

mental preparation.[152] They could be seen as examples of the *schemata* or *schema* that allow individuals to process and respond to social stimuli. Schemas have been defined as packets of information that allow the individual to recognise and make sense of the world around us. They are not mutually exclusive and overlap with one another, allowing the individual to adapt to new or ambiguous social situations by adapting pre-existing knowledge. Schemas have been suggested as a fundamental part of how memory functions and allows the individual to use memories to adapting to the changing world that they inhabit. It could be argued that they provide the individual with essential psychological and behavioural plans for social situations, allowing them to give meaning to and to make sense of the social world around them. In stressful situations, the individual is far more likely to utilise their schemas in order to cope with the psychological and emotional turmoil they may be experiencing.[153]

The pattern of statements that has been noted in the final speeches of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century priests reflected the traditional Catholic associations between death, forgiveness of the sins of others and absolution of one's own sin that are central to Catholic teachings.[154] Furthermore, the speech and behaviour of priests at their executions could be seen as part of a culturally established schema of martyrdom, which they were fulfilling through their actions. Requesting forgiveness for sins, while forgiving the sins of your enemies, was a mechanism by which the martyr could achieve the correct spiritual state in which to embrace death, while also providing a means of letting go of the physical life that was about to be taken from them. In a similar fashion, exhortations to their co-religionists to remain true to the Christian

[152] Idem, "'Consolation on Golgotha'", pp. 288-290.
[153] R. C. Shank and R. P. Abelson, *Scripts, Plans, Goals and Understanding*, (Hillsdale, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Inc., 1977); R. C. Shank, *Dynamic Memory*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1982)
[154] Catholic Encyclopaedia, http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01061a.htm, accessed 1st Oct 2013.

principles of charity and forgiveness followed the examples of Christ and the biblical martyrs. By embracing his social identity as a Catholic and a martyr, Lewis was able to provide a clear example of piety and fortitude in the face of persecution.

However, the question remains – how and why did Lewis seem to undergo such a transformation in his self-image during the months between the composition of his account of his trial and his last speech at the scaffold? In order to explain these changes, it is necessary to first consider the nature of self-image and the way in which inter-group conflict can affect personal and social identity in individuals. Both of these areas of human experience have received considerable attention from psychologists, who have shed light on the complex nature of the relationship between the individual and the group, and the nature of inter-group conflict. In order to understand the way that Lewis responded to the deeply personal attacks made against him during and after his trial, and to the importance of his martyrdom to the wider Catholic community, it is necessary to draw on this extensive empirical research.[155] In doing so, understand more deeply Lewis' psychological and emotional experiences, and how his transformation from a covert, peripatetic priest to a martyr for the Catholic Church contributed to the social identity and cohesion of the community he served.

The way in which we think about and describe ourselves reflects on how we relate to others, both personally and socially. Tajfel and Turner have suggested that self-image can be viewed as a continuum with personal identity at one end and social identity at the other. Personal identity relates to the traits that are perceived by the individual as describing their personality. While such traits do impact our social relationships, they are innate qualities, and do not describe social relationships with others or the individual's membership of distinct social groups. Tajfel and Turner have

[155] For details of Social Identity Theory, see chap. 2.

suggested that social groups can be understood as shaping individual's social identity in fundamental ways. They 'provide members with an identification of themselves in social terms'.[156] Social identity relates to the individual's understanding of themselves as similar or different to members of social groups. An example of social identity might be the belief that the individual belongs to a certain race or ethnicity. Such social groups, while being important to us, may actually be rather impersonal, with many of the other members being completely unknown to us.

In the case of St David Lewis, we find in his account of his trial that he defined himself before the court in a more personal fashion than he did on the scaffold. He emphasised his honesty, and the fact that he was an honourable man, whose character had been slandered in the court and libelled in the press.[157] In contrast, at his execution Lewis seemed to have moved along the continuum of self-image towards a more overtly social identity as a priest, a Catholic and a martyr.[158] It could be argued that his self-image as a martyr took the social component of his identity to an extreme, since he has completely negated his personal identity as an individual in favour of an exceptionally strong social identity as a martyr for his faith.

It might appear from consideration of this particularly powerful form of social identity, and the fact that it seems to override any sense of self-preservation, that social identity can have a damaging effect upon individuals. However, it has been argued that social identity is crucial in allowing the individual to make sense of their place within a complex social world. The social groups that individuals believe themselves to be members of are important parts of human society, shaping social interaction.

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[156] H. Tajfel and J. C. Turner, "The Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Behaviour", in W. G. Austin and S. Worchel (eds) *Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, (Chicago, Nelson-Hall Publishers, 1986), p. 16.

[157] Lewis, *A Narrative of the Imprisonment and Tryal of Mr. David Lewis*, pp. 2, 6-7.

[158] Ibid, p. 9-10; NLW Baker-Gabb, MS 703.

Tajfel and Turner argue that social groups 'create and define the individual's place in society', and 'provide their members with an identification of themselves in social terms'.[159]

In his speech from the scaffold, Lewis clearly identified himself as belonging to a number of social groups. He states that he is a Catholic, a Jesuit priest and a martyr, identifying himself with the most respected group in the community and an example of Catholic piety.[160] In doing so, he located himself within a wider social network that extended across the whole of Wales and beyond. His identity as a martyr included him in the even more significant and elite social group of those individuals who have died for their faith. Membership of this group is not simply the result of a profession of faith, but was believed to be the result of divine influence, as these individuals were called by God to witness to others.[161] These social identities had deep and powerful resonances with the Catholics who witnessed and read about his death.

As well as providing the individual with a means of defining their position in society, social identity can also affect social behaviour and interaction with others. The prominence of social identity as part of an individual's self-definition reflects the degree to which the individual identifies with the in-group – i.e. the group to which he or she believes themselves to be a member. It is this relationship between social identity and in-group identification that has been described in considerable detail in the work of Henri Tajfel. The Social Identity Theory (SIT) developed by Tajfel and his collaborators explains the importance of social identity to the individual, its

[159] H. Tajfel and J. C. Turner, "The Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Behaviour", in W. G. Austin and S. Worchel (eds) *Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, (Chicago, Nelson-Hall Publishers, 1986), p. 16.
[160] NLW Baker-Gabb, MS 703.
[161] Covington, *The Trail of Martyrdom,* p. 181.

relationship with in-group identification and the effect of these psychological phenomena on behaviour and social interaction.[162]

Tajfel and Turner proposed a view of social identity that contained three fundamental principles. Firstly, they posited that all individuals seek to enhance their self-esteem through maintaining a positive self-image and social identity. Secondly, the maintenance of a positive social identity depends to a large extent on the positive or negative value connotations ascribed to membership of particular social groups. Thirdly, such positive or negative value connotations are socially consensual, meaning that evaluation of an in-group by an individual is the result of comparison with other social groups.[163]

When we consider the case of St David Lewis, we can see clear evidence of these three principles at work. Firstly, Lewis struggled throughout his trial and imprisonment to maintain a positive self-image, initially by refuting the accusations of hypocrisy, drunkenness and theft made at his trial, and subsequently by cultivating a strong, positive social identity as a Catholic, a priest and a martyr. When we consider the value connotations attached to membership of these social groups, we see that they all had strong positive connotations within Catholic culture. The doctrine of apostolic succession espoused by the Catholic Church extolled the view that it was the one true church founded by Christ through St Peter.[164] The ordination and celibacy of the clergy raised them above the laity in the teachings of the Church, and the Council of Trent had further enhanced their status by emphasising that priests were the only legitimate

[162] H. Tajfel, "Interindividual Behaviour and Intergroup Behaviour" and Ibid,, "Social Categorisation, Social Identity and Social Comparison" in Ibid,, *Differentiation Between Social Groups: Studies in the Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, (London, Academic Press Inc., 1978), pp. 27-60 and pp. 61-76; Tajfel and Turner, "The Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Behaviour", p. 16.
[163] Tajfel and Turner, "The Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Behaviour", p. 16.
[164] Catholic Encyclopaedia, http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01641a.htm, accessed 2nd Oct 2013.

means of accessing the sacraments of the Church.[165] The social identity of the martyr had particularly positive connotations for those who were seen as members of this most revered of groups within Catholic culture. The ancient and biblical martyrs and those created in Europe since the Reformation were seen to be called by God to act as the ultimate witnesses for His power and the "truth" of the Catholic Church.[166] By identifying himself with these prestigious groups, Lewis defended his self–image against the attacks that were made on him, and succeeded in maintaining a positive social identity. Many of the positive connotations that were ascribed by Catholics to the social groups with which Lewis identified were derived from comparisons with other religious groups, particularly with Protestants. The belief that the Catholic Church was superior to the Protestant churches rested on the Catholic belief that theirs was the church created by Christ and that their doctrines and teachings had divine authority originating from God's representative on earth, the Pope.[167]

It has been observed that, in order to bolster ones self-image and to maintain high self-esteem, individuals will make positively discrepant comparisons of the in-group and out-group.[168] However, the questions still remains as to how Lewis came to reinforce his self-image through embracing such a powerful social identity? SIT can also help in answering these deeper questions about Lewis' experiences by highlighting the link between social identity and intergroup behaviour. As Tajfel and Turner observed, because social identity is determined by identification with in-groups, it can play a significant role in the way individuals relate to each other.[169] They suggest that within social interaction there is a continuum from inter-individual and

[165] Ibid, http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11279a.htm, accessed 2nd Oct 2013
[166] Covington, *The Trail of Martyrdom,* p. 181.
[167] Catholic Encyclopaedia, http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01641a.htm, accessed 2nd Oct 2013.
[168] Tajfel and Turner, "The Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Behaviour", p. 16.
[169] Ibid.

intergroup relations. Inter-individual interaction is 'any social encounter between two or more people in which all interaction that takes place is determined by the personal relationships between the individuals and by their respective individual characteristics'.[170] In contrast, the intergroup extreme of social interaction is when 'all of the behaviour of two or more individuals towards each other is determined by their membership of different social groups or categories'.[171] In real life, individuals always incorporate some level of intergroup interaction in their social relations to a greater or lesser extent. However, when social interaction lies closer to the intergroup end of the continuum, prejudice and stereotyping can mean that a person or persons concerned can cease to see each other as individuals. Instead generalisation of their personality traits and even physical appearance to match the pre-conceived ideas about that group can influence behaviour and interaction.[172]

During the course of his trial, Lewis was accused of various immoral acts characteristic of Protestant anti-popish depictions of Catholics, particularly Jesuit priests. The accusations of hypocrisy and exploitation of his parishioners' ignorance for his own financial gain were typical of the accusations made generally against the Catholic clergy by Protestant polemicists.[173] However, these attacks were not simply the accusations of unknown informers, but were made by people that Lewis had known personally. He claimed that John Arnold, his chief persecutor, had been well-known to him prior to his arrest, and was a man he had counted amongst his friends.[174] Similarly, the Jameses had for many years been employed by Lewis as servants, and,

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[170] Ibid, pp. 8-9.
[171] Ibid,
[172] Ibid, p. 9.
[173] Lewis, *A Narrative of the Imprisonment and Tryal of Mr. David Lewis*, p. 4;Anon., *A Letter From a Gentleman in the Country*, p. 2
[174] NLW Baker-Gabb, MS 703.

although the relationship had become hostile, it was none the less a personal one.[175] It would seem from the kinds of accusations made against Lewis, and the fact that they were made by people who were well-known to him, that the kind of de-individualisation that Tajfel and Turner described occurred in the courtroom during Lewis' trial. Those who persecuted Lewis had ceased to see him as an individual and instead attacked him as part of a dangerous out-group.

It would seem from his response to the personal attacks being made against him, that Lewis, in stark contrast to his accusers, treated his trial in a far more inter-personal fashion. He did not attack the witnesses or his prosecutors as Protestants, but rather drew the court's attention to the personal relationships he had with each of them.[176] He also appealed to the judge to recognise the erroneous nature of the claims being made against him in the press, defending his individual honour and morality.[177] However, by the time Lewis reached the scaffold, his reactions seem to have moved further along the continuum of social interaction becoming more intergroup in nature. While he again resisted any urge to attack his persecutors as Protestants, he had clearly come to think of himself in terms of his membership of particular social groups.

Again the question arises as to why such a change occurred? In the intervening period between Lewis composing his account of his arrest and trial and his producing his last speech, he had come under further attack in the press. These attacks reiterated the claims made in the original pamphlet that appeared immediately after his arrest, and added accusations of drunkenness and false prophecy to the diatribe against him.[178] He was also taken to London along with another Welsh priest to answer the charges of Oates and Bedloe that they were involved in the imaginary plot to kill the king.

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[175] NLW Baker-Gabb, MS 703.
[176] Lewis, *A Narrative of the Imprisonment and Tryal of Mr. David Lewis*, pp. 6-7.
[177] NLW Baker-Gabb, MS 703.
[178] Anon., *A Letter From a Gentleman in the Country, passim.*

There he was advised by Shaftesbury to confess what he knew of the plot, and also to convert, in order to save himself from a traitor's death. Lewis refused to convert, and could reveal nothing of the fictitious plot, and so was returned to Usk to await his execution.[179] By this time it must have become abundantly clear to Lewis that both the accusations made against him and the press attacks were being made because he was a Catholic and a priest, and that there was little he could do to stop or refute such accusations. He was no longer being treated as an individual, but as a Catholic and a Jesuit, indistinguishable in the mind of anti-papists from their stereotypical image of the evil, scheming Jesuits of their own imaginations.

While his accusers saw his Catholicism and priesthood as indicators of his membership of a politically treacherous and immoral out-group, at his execution Lewis freely admitted both his faith and his vocation.[180] He emphasised the Catholic in-group's positive interpretation of what it is to be faithful to the Roman Church and the Society of Jesus. These actions can be viewed as clear examples of how Lewis positively interpreted his social identity, thereby bolstering his damaged self-image. Tajfel and Turner have argued that when faced with discrimination, persecution and negative stereotyping as a result of their perceived membership of a particular social group, individuals can respond in a number of different ways. When it is physically or socially impossible for the individual to leave the targeted group and move to one that is more positively viewed, individuals act to re-define the values assigned to their in-group, therefore, raising their positive self-image.[181] In this case, faced with extreme prejudice and discrimination, and unable and unwilling to remove himself from the Catholic, Jesuit in-group, Lewis chose to re-define his group's attributed values.

[179] Ellis, *The Catholic Martyrs of Wales, 1535-1680*, pp. 130-5.
[180] NLW Baker-Gabb, MS 703.
[181] Tajfel and Turner, "The Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Behaviour", p. 20.

Instead of being viewed as traitorous, immoral and dishonourable, Lewis re-classified his social group as honourable, long suffering and blessed.

This articulation of a positive interpretation of what it was to be a Catholic, not only aided Lewis in his hour of need, but also helped the community as a whole. The Catholic community of Monmouthshire seems to have been close-knit and flourishing in the Restoration period.[182] While Catholics in the region had experienced much persecution in the post-Reformation era, the targeting of priests and high-ranking Catholics in the immediate aftermath of the Popish Plot, was the first sustained attack on them since the end of the Civil War. It must have seemed a shocking and unwelcome return to the old hostilities between Protestants and Catholics. The devastation of the mission through the loss of so many priests was, at one level, a terrible blow to the Catholics living in the region. However, when we consider the way in which the leader of that mission, St David Lewis, responded to his impending death we find evidence that in some cases the horror of these executions could be used to reinforce Catholic identity and unite the community.

The message that Lewis sought to deliver from the scaffold was one of hope and perseverance, which could inspire the whole community. Like so many of the Catholic martyrs of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Lewis' final words were broadcast to the wider Catholic population. The original manuscript of his speech survived down to the present day, protected by the Catholic Baker-Gabb family of Abergavenny, and a faithful transcription of this document was produced and published along with his account of his arrest and trial.[183] While Lewis may have been vilified in the Protestant press, Catholic propagandists sought to ensure that his

[182] See chap. 1 for detailed analysis of the demography of Catholic Monmouthshire.
[183] NLW Baker-Gabb, MS 703; Lewis, *A Narrative of the Imprisonment and Tryal of Mr. David Lewis*.

martyrdom and his message of constancy, forgiveness and hope would reach those who had never known Fr Lewis during his life.[184]

The significance of martyrs to the maintenance of Catholic identity and culture during the early modern period has been widely discussed in the historiography. Dillon has argued that the martyrs of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries acted as 'triumphant emblems of Catholicism and the ultimate confirmation of its truth....a rallying point of identification for the English Catholics'.[185] Just as the martyr saints of the medieval period had provided a source of strength and comfort to those challenged by the unfamiliar and uncontrollable vagaries of life, the early modern martyrs provided Catholics with examples of fortitude and devotion in the face of persecution and terror. McClain has argued that in the absence of sacred spaces and institutional Church in England, martyrdom and the effects of persecution came to fulfil some of the need for religious expression amongst the Catholic population. The collection and veneration of martyrs' relics, as well as the literature produced to publicise the martyrs' trials and deaths, created and reinforced the identification of contemporary Catholics with martyrs.[186] Covington has argued in her analysis of behaviour at execution sites that Catholics, both lay and clerical, seemed to draw strength from the martyrdoms that they witnessed and read about. Furthermore, she depicts the martyrdom process as both a trial of spiritual resolve for the martyrs and an opportunity for Catholics to demonstrate their support for those who were about to die, and receive comfort and blessings from those dying on the scaffold.[187]

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[184] NLW Baker-Gabb, MS 703; Lewis, *A Narrative of the Imprisonment and Tryal of Mr. David Lewis*; St. David Lewis, *The Last Speech of Mr. David Lewis, Priest of the Society of Jesus, who was Executed as a Priest only, at Uske in Monmouth-shire, on 27th day of August, Anno Domini 1679*, (London, 1679).
[185] Dillon, *The Construction of Martyrdom*, p. 8.
[186] McClain, *Lest We Be Damned*, pp. 241-2.
[187] Covington, "'Consolation on Golgotha'", pp. 282-3.

The exemplary conduct of Lewis on the scaffold, the written and verbal messages printed after his death, and his physical relics, collected and preserved by the faithful, all contributed to the propagation of a strong Catholic identity. Lewis drew strength, as had other sixteenth- and seventeenth-century martyrs, from a Catholic identity depicting the faithful as members of the one true church, persecuted for their loyalty to Christ.[188] He in turn provided those Catholics, who witnessed his death and read his account and speech, with a clear demonstration of fortitude in the face of persecution and death. His urging of Catholics to remain steadfast in their faith had clear resonance for a community that was enduring the worst onslaught of anti-Catholic intolerance it had faced in a generation. The fact that priests, the leaders of this community, had been the main target for the likes of John Arnold and Charles Price, was a major blow to those Catholics seeking guidance, comfort and support during the crisis. However, through his death, Lewis continued to supply this comfort, and helped contribute to the Catholic religious culture of the region, through his martyrdom. As Covington notes the attendance of executions and the reading of the literature that was produced from the imprisonment and death of both clerical and lay martyrs, came to play an important role in sustaining the community, even defining it, in the face of a hostile regime.[189]

While his death provided edifying material for the Catholic propagandists that sought to inspire their coreligionists, the relics that were collected and preserved by the local Catholics also acted to reinforce Catholic identity and the distinctiveness of Catholic religious culture.[190] Following his death on the gallows, Lewis' body was carried in a remarkable procession through the town of Usk and was buried at the

[188] NLW Baker-Gabb, MS 703.
[189] Ibid, pp. 290-3.
[190] Photographs of these relics can be found in plates 34-36.

parish church. Despite the sentence of hanging, drawing and quartering that was delivered at his trial, Lewis was spared the indignities of a traitor's death on the pleas of the crowd.[191] As a result, the Catholic community of the Marches was able to collect a number of relics from Lewis' body, preserving them from generation to generation to be passed on to the various Catholic churches established in the region in the nineteenth century.[192] The veneration of these relics, enshrined in reliquaries and on altars across the county, speaks of the importance of his martyrdom as a demonstration to the community he had served of how Catholics could fashion their own positive self-image in the face of Protestant condemnation and stereotyping. Clearly, while the deaths of priests like Lewis were a major blow to the leadership of localised missions and communities, they could be turned into positive declarations of Catholic identity and solidarity.

The case of St David Lewis draws attention to the effect of religious, intergroup conflict at an individual level, and the degree to which such conflicts contributed to both the individual, social and wider, group identities. While anti-Catholic prejudice and persecution has been discussed in much detail by historians of both early modern Protestantism and Catholicism, there has been little consideration of the effect of such intolerance on individual Catholics or on the Catholic communities that endured such treatment.[193] It would appear that while the loss of so many priests on the South Wales Marches did have a significant, detrimental effect on missionary efforts in the region, the brutal executions that took place in the towns of

[191] Ellis, *The Catholic Martyrs of Wales, 1535-1680*, pp. 135-9.
[192] Photographs of the relics kept at the Catholic Church in Usk can be seen in photographic plates 35 and 36.
[193] Lake, "Antipopery: the Structure of a Prejudice", in R. P. Cust and A. Hughes (eds), *Conflict in Early Stuart England: Studies in Religion and Politics, 1603-1642*, 1989, pp. 72-106; Collins, "Restoration Anti-Catholicism: A Prejudice in Motion", in C. W. A. Prior and G. Burgess (eds), *England's Wars of Religion, Revisited*, 2011, pp. 284-301.

Monmouthshire and Glamorgan were not simply demonstrations of the power of the Protestant state over a group of religious and political dissidents. As Covington has noted, the process by which priests were arrested, tried and executed afforded Catholics an opportunity to witness for their cause.[194] It also allowed Catholics to gather (albeit surreptitiously) to support and comfort those about to die and those bereaved by their loss. Furthermore, such deaths could provide examples of piety that could be broadcast to the wider Catholic population through the popular press of the era, and also from one generation to the next. The effects of the behaviour and experiences of such men as St David Lewis upon the Catholic population could spread far beyond the confines of their own community and even their own century.

Derived from the Greek *martus*, meaning a witness, the word martyr has always been synonymous with the act of testifying for one's faith, and time and again the power of such testimony, has proved controversial for the martyr's own community and for those that persecuted them.[195] However, historians have perhaps not fully recognised the degree to which martyrdom involved witnessing by both those who were about to die and those that came to observe the execution as a moment of profound spiritual expression. The executions of early modern English and Welsh priests not only demonstrated the devotion of the condemned men, but also that of their supporters and followers.

Perhaps, martyrdom might appear to be one of the most lonely and individual actions that any person can undertake. The physical and mental suffering involved, and the contemporary criminalisation of the Catholic martyrs of England and Wales,

[194] Covington, "'Consolation on Golgotha'", pp. 282-3.
[195] Catholic Encyclopaedia, http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09736b.htm, accessed on 2nd Oct 2013.

has been interpreted as isolating the dying individual upon the scaffold. However, as the case of St David Lewis demonstrates, the relationship between the individual martyr and the community that produced them was far more complex than might appear initially.

Some of Lewis' personal acquaintances deserted him in his hour of need, using his arrest and trial as an opportunity to settle old scores and accuse him of immorality and hypocrisy. However, the Catholic community he had served during his long mission also produced those who remained loyal and supportive to the end. John Arnold was reduced to imprisoning members of the Catholic community who refused to give evidence against Lewis, and was even reported to have had some people beaten.[196] Over the long months of his imprisonment, Lewis faced a sustained attack upon him from the press, and was implicated in the erroneous plot concocted by Oates and Bedloe.[197] It would seem that the result of these assaults upon his character was not to isolate him from his fellow Catholics, but to inspire him to locate himself more firmly within his community through the emphasis of his social identity as a Catholic and a Jesuit. In his final address to the crowd gathered to witness his execution, Lewis fully pronounced this social identity in his firm declaration 'a Roman Catholick I am'.[198]

Lewis' martyrdom was more than the suffering of a single individual as it elicits a response by the response of local Catholics in the immediate aftermath of his death. The crowd of supporters that had gathered to witness Lewis' execution, themselves became part of the demonstration of Catholic identity and faith in their

[196] Kenyon, *The Popish Plot*, p. 213
[197] Anon., *The Condemnation of the Cheating Popish Priest*; Anon., *A Letter From a Gentleman in the Country, To his Friend in London.*
[198] NLW Baker-Gabb, MS 703.

demands that his body be spared quartering, instead burying it on consecrated ground, an action that seems rare in the annals of Catholic martyrdom. It was through the actions of these individuals, that Lewis' body was preserved in such a fashion as to afford some small relics, now preserved in the quiet church that sits opposite the site of his death.[199] It could be argued that, in the case of St David Lewis, martyrdom was not simply an individual act, the formation of one person's identity as a martyr, but rather a communal act of witnessing that still has resonance today.

[199] Photographs of the relics kept at the Catholic Church in Usk can be seen in photographic plates 35 and 36.

Chapter Six
Responding to Negative Identity: A Case Study of Two Monmouthshire Families

Having considered in earlier chapters the complex identity that emerged amongst some of Wales' missionary clergy, this chapter will focus on the equally multifaceted identity formed by the laity. While the priests of the post-Reformation missions could shape their identity through the experience of vocation, martyrdom, and the ideological positions of their clerical orders, the images of Catholicism available to the laity differed in key respects. The lay population were not subject to the same level of criminalisation as the priesthood, but were still stigmatised by harsh anti-Catholic stereotypes that questioned their moral integrity and loyalty to the state. The limitations placed upon their religious practices and social integration meant that while they could continue to receive the Sacraments and observe the rituals of the Roman Church, Catholics were also subject to significant sanctions. By the mid to late-seventeenth century, Catholics had adapted to these limitations. In regions of the country where significant numbers of Catholics continued to exist, lay Catholic identity had been maintained through a complex religious culture, occasional conformity, and private observance.

This chapter will focus on the way in which lay identity was defined and shaped by individuals living in one of the seventeenth-century's largest Catholic communities. It will focus upon the experiences and attitudes of two interconnected families living in northern and eastern Monmouthshire. These families developed divergent responses to the limitations placed upon them as they continued to maintain their Catholic faith, reflecting both their subtly different social positions and family relationships. The subjects of this case study, the Lewises and Gunters, endeavoured from the middle to the end of the seventeenth century to maintain their Catholicism

through both conformity and recusancy. Consideration of these families reveals that Catholics did not always adopt single strategies for dealing with the problems of occupying a subordinate position in Protestant society. Through examination of the subtle differences in the experiences of these families, this chapter will show that Catholic lay identity was formed through interaction with both Catholics and Protestants, and as a result of the wider social and political climate of the later seventeenth century

As has been explored throughout this thesis, the variations between toleration and persecution that characterised Catholic/Protestant relations played a significant role in forming religious identity in the post-Reformation era. The anti-Catholic political discourse, that had played a significant role in English society since the Elizabethan period, had a profound effect on the position of all Catholics. In both cultural and legal terms, their status was one of subordination. However, in regions like northern and eastern Monmouthshire some high ranking families found opportunities to raise themselves and their relations out of this position and to afford protection to those below them in the social order. This chapter describes how these circumstances inspired a number of different means by which Catholics could challenge, evade and circumvent the negative identity that was ascribed to them by the Anglican regime. The Lewises and Gunters illustrate the subtly different ways in which Catholics could respond to the pressure to conform and to the negative social identity associated with their religion. This chapter will suggest that the many different responses to the social and political challenges faced by the Catholic laity indicate that the group's social identity was multi-dimensional and adaptable to social circumstance, political opportunity, and cultural variance.

The emergence of distinct denominational differences within Christianity during the Reformation has been identified as a key factor that shaped early modern society across Europe.[1] The powerful interplay between Church, state and laity as the religious allegiances of the continent were redrawn, marked the emergence of new definitions of what it was to be a Christian. Much historical discussion has focused on which social groups and political forces drove these sweeping changes in the later sixteenth to early eighteenth centuries.[2] The emergence of the confessionalisation thesis in the 1980s drew attention to the way in which the reshaping of Christianity through the Protestant and Catholic Reformations contributed to the political and social development of modern European culture. It also highlighted how the very notion of religious identity had been profoundly altered by the restructuring of European Christianity produced by the Protestant and Catholic Reformations.[3] As members of the clergy on both sides of the Protestant/Catholic divide sought to promote their own version of Christian doctrine, the notion of distinct confessional identities took shape.

The relationship between the elite and the lower orders of society posited in the confessionalisation thesis, and the view that religious identity was shaped by the spiritual concerns of educated and literate leaders, cannot simply be grafted onto Welsh society. The gradations of Welsh society were not an exact match for those of England. Patterns of allegiance and social influence did reflect similar patterns seen

[1] T. A Brady, "Confessionalization: The Career of a Concept", in J. M. Headley, H. J. Hillerbrand and A. J. Papalas, *Confessionalization in Europe, 1555-1700: Essays in Honor and Memory of Bodo Nischan* (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2004) p. 4.
[2] S. R. Boettcher, "Confessionalization: Reformation, Religion, Absolutism, and Modernity", *HC*, 2, 2004, 100, pp. 3.
[3] Boettcher, "Confessionalization", pp. 4; Brady, "Confessionalization: The Career of a Concept", in Headley et al, *Confessionalization in Europe*, p. 13; H. Schilling, "Confessionalization: Historical and Scholarly Perspectives of a Comparative and Interdisciplinary Paradigm", in Ibid, pp. 21-36.

in England and other parts of Europe, but still retained structures of an earlier age.[4] The presence of powerful aristocratic Catholic families, like the Herberts or the Worcesters, clearly shaped the development of Catholic communities in specific regions of Wales in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Even after the Civil War, the influence of these families in the Marches was still being felt even if it had been diminished.[5] Complicating these patterns of political power and religious allegiance are the gentry and professional class, whose support of priests and protection of poorer Catholics emerged as a significant factor in the survival of Catholicism. However, it should also be recognised that Welsh society was also composed of a variety of denominational groups, who often coexisted in close proximity to each other. This would suggest that the influence of the elite limited in its scope, as the diversity of religious groups remained a feature of Principality throughout the upheavals of the mid-seventeenth century.[6]

The origins of Catholic lay identity in Wales cannot simply be seen as the product of an identical set of social processes which have been identified in the Continental Catholic communities. In the absence of a cohesive political leadership, or even a significant missionary presence until the early 1600s, Welsh Catholics were not subject to the same kind of structured religious instruction that could be expected

[4] J. G. Jones, "The Welsh Gentry and the Image of the 'Cambro-Briton', c. 1603-25", *WHR*, 20, 2000-2001, pp. 615-655.
[5] P. Jenkins, "Anti-popery on the Welsh Marches in the seventeenth century", *HJ*, 23, 1980, pp. 279-280.
[6] Ibid, pp. 277, 282. In the 1650s and 1660s, a number of cases of persecution of Anabaptists and Quakers in South Wales counties were printed as broadsides and distributed around the country, Anon., *An Alarum To Corporations: Or, The Giddy sort of Hereticks Designs, unmask* (London, 1659); Anon., *For the King, And both Houses of Parliament. Being a Short Declaration of the cruelty inflicted upon some of the servants of the Lord now called Quakers, by some barbourous and bloudy men Inhabitants in Merionyth shire in North Wales, the 3d Month. 1660. And in part of South Wales* (London, 1660).

in communities in Catholic territories.[7] Furthermore, Catholics living in England and Wales in the aftermath of the Elizabethan religious reforms, had lost the structures of an institutional church, and needed to redevelop the ties that had previously defined their social positions. Models that posit a top-down enforcement of religious identity also fail to account for the complexity of the relationship between the clergy and laity in regions like Wales. Outside of the stable residential missions at the Cwm, Welshpool and Holywell, the Welsh missionary priests were forced to adopt a peripatetic lifestyle.[8] As a result, many Catholics were afforded sporadic contact with the priesthood. However, it would be incorrect to assert that the clergy and the laity operated in distinct social strata as they were largely drawn from the same socio-economic groups as those that they served.[9] Given these complex social relationships between the elite and the mass of the Catholic population and between the clergy and laity, the emergence of shared and divergent traits within Catholic identity is perhaps unsurprising. It could be argued that they reflected not only the isolation of the community from the wider Catholic world, but also the influence of national and local political, economic and social concerns in shaping the lives of the individuals within the community.

Given the wide geographical distribution of the Catholic population and their social diversity, it might be expected that there was little similarity of experience around which lay identity could be constructed. However, similar patterns of experience can be found both within the lay community and between the laity and the

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[7] R. L. Williams, "Forbidden Sacred Spaces in Reformation England" in A. Spicer and S. Hamilton (ed.), *Defining the holy: sacred space in medieval and early modern Europe* (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2005) p. 99.
[8] Sir John Trevor, *An Abstract of Several Examinations Taken upon Oath in the Counties of Monmouth and Hereford* (London, 1680) pp. 3-12.
[9] J. M. Cleary, *A Checklist of Welsh Students in the Seminaries, Part 1, 1568-1603* (Cardiff, Newman Association, 1958) pp. 8-9.

clergy. The fact that both the clergy and the laity were subject to persecution and negative stereotyping had a significant effect on shaping the identity of both groups. It could be argued that lay and clerical identity were fundamentally connected in the Catholic community. The interrelationship between the identities of the clergy and laity is perhaps most clearly shown in the role of martyrdom as a conceptual basis for Catholic social identity. Dillon has highlighted the importance of the martyr to Catholics during the Reformation and beyond. She argues that the collections of contemporary accounts that were compiled and published during the eighteenth century acted to reconstruct the deaths of priests and laymen, so that these individuals became 'triumphant emblems of Catholicism and the ultimate confirmation of its truth....a rallying point of identification for the English Catholics'.[10] McClain has highlighted how, despite the fact that the majority of martyrs were drawn from the priesthood, martyrdom and persecution also formed an important part of lay identity. She argues that the identification with martyrdom and persecution generally in the English Catholic community reflected their belief in the fundamental similarity of their subordinate position under a hostile Protestant state and the treatment of early Christians.[11] Such views sought to link contemporary Catholics with Biblical figures that had endured suffering for their beliefs, including Christ, and with the martyrs of the early Church.[12] Gregory has suggested that the existence of martyrs in all Christian denominations demonstrated a shared sense that martyrdom was indicative of fidelity

[10]A. Dillon, *The Construction of Martyrdom in the English Catholic Community, 1535-1603* (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2002) p. 8.
[11] L. McClain, *Lest We Be Damned: Practical innovation and lived experience among Catholics in Protestant England, 1559-1642* (London, Routledge, 2004) pp. 236-9.
[12] Ibid.

to Christ, despite denominational disagreement over the key aspects of Christian doctrine.[13]

Identification with martyrdom acted to link Catholics to each other, to communities living on the Continent, and, most importantly, to their shared Christian heritage.[14] In the face of the challenge presented by the dominance of Anglicanism and in the absence of a structured institutional Church, English and Welsh Catholics could maintain their belief in the "truth" of their faith through the links they perceived with the Church founded by the Apostles.[15] That religious identity amongst English and Welsh Catholics was being formed through comparisons of their situation with historical and contemporary examples.[16] In turn this raises interesting questions about the way in which clerical and lay social identities influenced and supported each other. As was demonstrated in the martyrdom of St David Lewis, the affective and cognitive processes that were experienced by some priestly martyrs could have significant implications for the communities that they served, as the trial and execution of such men formed part of the theatricality of public justice in the English state.[17] The practise of returning priests to their places of origin for execution may have been intended to provide a brutal example to the disobedient populace of the terrible fate the could await them. However, in the case of martyrs, this appears to have had the opposite effect. The participation of neighbours, friends and family members in the execution process was remarkable in some of the late seventeenth-century Welsh executions. The collection of relics from the priests' remains were also clear evidence of the

[13] B. S. Gregory, *Salvation at Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 2001) pp. 137-8.
[14] McClain, *Lest We Be Damned*, p. 238.
[15] Catholic Encyclopaedia, accessed http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01641a.htm, 8th Oct 2013.
[16] McClain, *Lest We Be Damned*, pp. 241-242; Anon., *The Catholick Mirrour* (London, 1662), *passim*.
[17] St. David Lewis, *The Last Speech of Mr. David Lewis, Priest of the Society of Jesus, who was Executed as a Priest only, at Uske in Monmouth-shire, on 27th day of August, Anno Domini 1679* (London, 1679).

importance of the crowd in the later interpretation of the events.[18] The execution of martyrs in the midst of their own communities was not limited to the Catholic priests of the Elizabethan and Stuart regimes. Foxe recorded that a number of Marian martyrs were returned to the towns and cities where they had preached and ministered to be executed. The former bishop of Worcester and Gloucester, John Hooper, and Raymond Taylor, vicar of Hadleigh, were both reported to have expressed great joy that their executions were to be witnessed by members of their native communities.[19] Such sentiments are indicative of how martyrs from both sides were aware of the power of their executions to inspire religious commitment in those that witnessed them. By trying and executing both Catholics and Protestants in their communities, the role of the crowd in the transformation of the individual into a martyr was heightened. For those on both sides of the confessional divide, the experience of religious conflict and persecution meant that martyrdom became integrated within the communities' definition of their identity.

However, key differences in the way that martyrdom was integrated into Catholic, as opposed to Protestant group identity are evident. The collection of relics from execution sites by Catholics demonstrated their attitude to the physical remains and position of the martyr within the community after death. The emergence of stories of miraculous healing by these relics in the years immediately after the martyrs' deaths, also suggest that, for some Catholics, these men were saintly.[20] These physical reminders of those that had died, meant that the cultural resonance of martyrdom could be integrated into the religious practices of the community, and the contemporary

[18] For photographic evidence of Welsh martyrological relics, see photographic plates 34-36.
[19] John Foxe's The Acts and Monuments Online, accessed at http://www.johnfoxe.org/index.php?realm=text&edition=1583&gototype=modern, 12th May 2011.
[20] S. Covington, "Consolation on Golgotha": Comforters and Sustainers of Dying Priests in England, 1580-1625", *JEH*, Vol. 60, No. 2, 2009, pp. 288-290.

martyrs could be directly associated with those saints that had been executed under Roman persecution.[21] The collection and protection of these physical remains by the laity demonstrates the importance of identification as a persecuted community in defining and shaping notions of what it meant to be Catholic.

Further to the role of persecution of the community's religious leaders in shaping Catholic identity generally, the importance of local social and political circumstances needs also to be considered. In doing so, it is necessary to look at the ideas and connections between individual Catholics. These may appear tangential to the question of how the Catholic laity identified themselves as distinct in the early modern period. However, the examples of the two families that are the focus of this case study demonstrate that local circumstances, familial connections, and social circumstances were crucial in building a more cohesive and complete view of the way that Catholics related to each other and the wider social world.

The Gunters and Lewises both lived an area of the country where religious heterodoxy had developed over several generations.[22] The region around Abergavenny and north-eastern Monmouthshire had long been a stronghold for Catholic interests. The concentration of Catholicism in this part of the Marches should not simply be seen as the product of the protection and patronage provided by the Somerset family based at Raglan Castle. The community based at Abergavenny has instead been described as the result of the 'nonconformity' of the gentry and professional members of its society.[23] Furthermore, the parishes of north-eastern Monmouthshire running along the border with Herefordshire were also long-standing centres of Catholicism, even to the point of rebellion. The Whitsun Riots of 1605 led

[21] McClain, *Lest We Be Damned*, pp. 241-242
[22] Abergavenny Museum, Gunter, MS 22a;
[23] J. K. Knight, "A Nonconformity of the Gentry? Catholic Recusancy in Seventeenth-Century Abergavenny", *MA*, 20, 2004, p. 151.

to serious concern in London in the aftermath of the Gunpowder Plot, and were the product of significant Catholic unrest, while rumours of a conspiracy by the Catholic earl of Worcester raged in 1641.[24] The Monnow Valley lying on the north-western border of Monmouthshire and Herefordshire acted again as the point of origin for concerns over Catholic activities in the 1670s. Key and Ward's suggestion that this region may have been the source for the shocking allegations of plots to take over the country during the Popish Plot, indicate the degree to which this otherwise parochial region of the country could become politically volatile and religiously unstable.[25]

However, this was not to say that this region was unproductive. By the mid-seventeenth century, Abergavenny had emerged as a town of some economic significance in South Wales, due to the importance of the wool trade in the region. The town's major export was Welsh flannel, as testified by the large number of fulling and tucking mills, as well as the large flocks of sheep that were grazed on the hills surrounding the urban centre.[26] Abergavenny also hosted a market that provided essential goods to the upland areas to the north. Numerous tradesmen also operated in the town suggesting the degree to which it operated as an important social and economic centre for northern Monmouthshire.[27] The title of Lord Bergavenny was held by the Nevills, but they lived in Kent. In the place of a residential lord a number of local families had prominence in the town, some of whom were Catholic. The Gabbs were amongst these influential families, along with the Bakers, who had acted as stewards to the Nevills for generations.[28]

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[24] R. Matthias, *Whitsun Riots: an account of a commotion amongst Catholics in Herefordshire and Monmouthshire in 1605*, 1963, Bowes and Bowes, London, *passim*; Anon., *A Discovery of a horrible and Bloody Treason And Conspiracie* (London, 1641).
[25] N. Key and J. Ward, "'Divided into Parties': Exclusion Crisis Origins in Monmouth", *EHR*, 115, 464, 2000, p. 1166
[26] J. K. Knight, "A Nonconformity of the Gentry? Catholic Recusancy in Seventeenth-Century Abergavenny", *MA*, 20, 2004, pp. 145-7.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Ibid, pp. 145-8; R. Allen, "Catholic records in the attic", *GLH*, 86, 1999, pp. 17-19.

None of the families that will be discussed in this chapter were drawn from the very top of Catholic society, despite sharing relations with some of the most significant families in the region. Although the Gunters of the Priory were amongst the most socially significant in the town, they were Anglican.[29] It is their Catholic cousins living in Cross and Frogmore Street that are the focus of this chapter. It is important to note that while the Lewises and Gunters were significantly more economically secure than the majority of Welsh society, they reflected the social strata from which many Catholics were drawn in seventeenth-century Wales.[30] As headmasters and attorneys, these families enjoyed positions of relative influence within the Catholic communities of northern and eastern Monmouthshire, but were not immune to the possibilities of persecution and even imprisonment for their religious practices.

A further reason for choosing to focus discussion on these two families is the fact that they demonstrate the extent to which the behaviour of Catholics was shaped within a distinct local community of linked families. In seeking to re-focus discussion on the role of the local political and social environment, it is imperative that the social relationships that formed the basis of concepts of sameness and difference are also considered. The Lewises and Gunters were linked by marriage, occupied similar positions in the society and lived within the same small town. Furthermore, they were linked by marriage, blood and patronage to numerous other Catholic families, and shared priests with some of the most prominent Catholics in the region.[31] Such links indicate the degree to which community and identity were intertwined in this society.

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[29] J. A. Bradney, The *history of Monmouthshire from the coming of the Normans into Wales down to the present time*, Vol. 1 (London, Mitchell, Hughes and Clarke, 1907) p. 41.
[30] Ibid.
[31] For family connections of the Lewises see Appendix I; NLW, Martin Cleary, MS 33. For a partial family tree of the Gunters of the Priory and Cross Street see Appendix C; G.W. Gunter, "Pedigree of the Family of Gunter of Abergavenny and of London", *GLH*, 69, 1990, p. 12. For the interconnection of the Gunters and Milbornes see Appendix E; Bradney, *The history of Monmouthshire*, Vol. 1, p. 41.

The connections between individuals operated on many different levels of social interaction, ranging from shared cultural experiences to the emotional bonds of family and kinship. The significance of these links became ever more apparent during the expansion and contraction of the Catholic community in Monmouthshire in the second half of the seventeenth century. Both of these families were affected in differing ways by the crisis that arose from the Popish Plot in 1678-1680 and the subsequent restructuring of Catholicism in the region.

While the Lewis family produced one of the most prominent and famous Welsh martyrs of the seventeenth century, their forebears had originally been Protestant and had played a prominent role in Abergavenny's history. The English-style Lewis surname first emerged amongst the children of Lewis ap John (alias Wallis), later vicar of Abergavenny.[32] Following the Reformation, the family conformed to the Anglicanism of the Elizabethan regime and prospered. Wallis' son, David (c. 1520-84) acted as a judge of the admiralty and was the first principal of Jesus College, Oxford, while his daughter married into the Baker family. At this time the Bakers had also conformed, but have been described by Rees as sympathetic to Catholics.[33] However, Maud's conformity was not passed on to her children, as one of her sons became the famous Benedictine scholar and mystical writer, Augustine Baker (1575-1641).[34] Her daughter, Margaret, married into the Pritchard family and was reported for her recusancy in 1608.[35] Margaret Pritchard's brothers-in-law and her son, John, all became Jesuit priests.[36] This increasingly recusant branch of Lewis Wallis' descendants were again returned to the Lewis line through the marriage of

[32] NLW, Martin Cleary, MS 33.
[33] D. D. Rees, "Baker, David (1575–1641)", *ODNB*, 2004, http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/1110, accessed 14 May 2012.
[34] Ibid.
[35] NLW, Martin Cleary, MS 33.
[36] Ibid.

Margaret's daughter, also called Margaret, to one of her Lewis cousins, Morgan Lewis.[37]

It is this branch of the Lewis family that will be the focus of this case study. Morgan Lewis and his children represent an interesting strand of the Catholic community that existed within the somewhat unorthodox religious culture of Abergavenny. As headmaster of the town's grammar school, Morgan Lewis and his family were socially significant members of the professional layer of Abergavenny society. This was a position that necessitated outward religious conformity, which Morgan Lewis maintained throughout his public career. In contrast, his wife remained a committed Catholic, and his marriage to her connected him to several priests and two Catholic families.[38]

The recusancy of his family might, in a less religiously diverse region, have been a barrier to his occupation of the headmastership of the town's grammar school. Surprisingly, in Abergavenny this did not bar Morgan Lewis' employment. This is perhaps indicative of the level of toleration that existed in the town in the early seventeenth century. Nevertheless, the fact that the noted Benedictine, Augustine Baker, uncle of Lewis' wife, consistently recommended the sons of recusant families to the school did raise suspicions.[39] In June 1626, the irregularities in the Lewis family's religious life, and the fact that so many of the pupils at the grammar school were Catholics, led to the issue being raised in Parliament. Pymme reported from the Committee for Religion upon Lewis' case to the House. However, Lewis was vouched to be 'conformable' by 'Gentlemen of worth' from the town, who also stated that

[37] Details of the family connections can be found in Appendix I. NLW, Martin Cleary, MS 33
[38] See Appendix I. NLW, Martin Cleary, MS 33
[39] NLW, Martin Cleary, MS 7.

Lewis had endeavoured to also bring his wife to the parish church.[40] These statements of his good character, along with his promises to follow the committee's admonition to catechise his charges, appear to have satisfied those concerned by the activities at the town grammar school.[41] Such interest in the goings on at the school in Abergavenny and the religious attitudes of the headmaster, suggest the degree to which Catholics and those associated with them could never become too comfortable in the security of their positions, or express their religious identity too openly.

While Morgan Lewis declared himself 'conformable' and asserted that he had taken his Catholic wife to church to receive communion in 1626, the reality of his family's religious life was far more complicated at this time. As well as possessing a Catholic wife, Morgan Lewis had also allowed all his children except his son, David, to be raised Catholics.[42] His behaviour demonstrates that his religious identity was more complex than he had portrayed to the MPs that had investigated him. Lewis' assertion that he conformed to the Anglican Church was contradicted by Henry Milborne's (c. 1630-1692) printed assertion, that Lewis was a 'Romanist', when he had been a pupil at the grammar school at this time. The fact that this statement was made at a time when Milborne was attempting to distance himself from Catholicism suggests that the religious convictions of Lewis as schoolmaster were widely known in the community.[43] Milborne had nothing to gain, and much to lose, by admitting his old headmaster's Catholicism. Lewis appears to have openly converted to Catholicism following his retirement from public life. The contradictory nature of the evidence

[40] *CJ*, "10th June 1626", vol. 1 1547-1629, 1802, pp. 869-870, http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=1883&strquery=suspected recusant, accessed 6th April 2012.
[41] Ibid.
[42] T. P. Ellis, *The Catholic Martyrs of Wales, 1535-1680* (London, Burns, Oates and Washborne, 1933) p. 129.
[43] Anon., *A Letter From a Gentleman in Glocestershire To a Friend In London* (London, [1679]), p. 14.

surrounding Morgan Lewis' religious allegiances suggest that his commitment to the Anglican Church was fleeting and arose when necessary, while his true faith remained Catholic. In order to maintain his position as headmaster at the grammar school and to secure his family's position, Lewis outwardly conformed and acknowledged his true faith only in private.

The patterns of religious observance in the Lewis family were further complicated by the way in which Morgan and Margaret Lewis decided to raise their several surviving children. Their decisions betray a religious pragmatism, perhaps reflecting the significant limitations that arose from Catholic religious identity. All but one of their children were raised Catholic.[44] Their decision to raise David Lewis to be at least outwardly conforming, suggests that some kind of religious compromise was reached. Perhaps the couple intended that the next generation to continue the practice they had adopted of one member of the family conforming to protect the others. It was also intended that he be trained as a lawyer.[45] However, their desire to raise their youngest child within the Anglican tradition was not realised. David Lewis' conversion to Catholicism in his adolescence while touring France with Lord Rivers and his subsequent entry into the priesthood, brought any plans for outward conformity as a member of the laity to an abrupt end.[46]

The other sons of Morgan and Margaret Lewis all pursued careers in the law, trade, or medicine, meaning that they, like their father, continued to occupy comfortable positions within the professional and trading classes of society. Their daughter also continued to occupy a position of some local prominence, through her

[44] Ellis, *The Catholic Martyrs of Wales*, pp. 129-39.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid.

marriage to the attorney, Thomas Gunter II (1627-1711).[47] The sons of the Lewis family do seem to have maintained some level of Catholic worship within the family as David Lewis II (still living in 1688), son of Richard Lewis and named after his illustrious Jesuit uncle, also became a priest.[48]

This pattern of conformity and recusancy across at least two generations suggests that the Lewis family sought a pattern of observance that provided a degree of protection for the family. Their position in society was not sufficient to operate above the recusancy laws, which could still lead to financial ruin if such laws came to be enforced with any vigour.[49] Morgan Lewis' appointment to a position of such educational influence seems to indicate that Abergavenny was a remarkably tolerant environment in which to live as a Catholic. However, even with this level of apparent integration between Protestants and Catholics, he was still required to outwardly conform to maintain his public teaching career.[50] Furthermore, the interference of external interested parties, as occurred in 1626, could always upset this fine social balance.[51] Clearly Morgan Lewis did not feel completely capable of ignoring such considerations, and found his religious identity and behaviour fundamentally shaped by the negative stereotyping that drove the State to inculcate an inconsistent, but harsh regime of blanket sanctions against the Catholic population.

The pattern of public conformity and private observance demonstrated by the Lewis family could be seen as placing them within the group described as "church papists", a contemporary term that covered the variety of levels of observance that

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[47] For a partial family tree of the Gunters of the Priory and Cross Street see Appendix C; G.W. Gunter, "Pedigree of the Family of Gunter of Abergavenny and of London", *GLH*, 69, 1990, p. 12.
[48] NLW Joseph Herbert Canning, MS 17, p. 27.
[49] The 1559 Act of Supremacy had imposed a shilling fine for recusancy. However, this was increased to £20 in 1581.
[50] Ellis suggests that Morgan Lewis did not convert until the late 1630s at the earliest, Ellis, *The Catholic Martyrs of Wales*, p. 130.
[51] *CJ*, "10th June 1626", vol. 1 1547-1629, 1802, pp. 869-870, http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=1883&strquery=suspected recusant, accessed 6th April 2012.

existed between recusancy and fully embracing the Anglican Church.[52] However, the ambiguity of this term means that it does little to elucidate Morgan Lewis' religious intent, the extent to which such behaviour was influenced by anti-Catholicism, or the variety of behaviours within the overall structure of Catholic identity. "Church papistry" covered the practices of many individuals, ranging from religiously conservative parish Anglicans, through to those that remained Catholic at heart and attended service only to avoid recusancy fines.[53] This confusion over the nature of what actually constitutes a church papist has hampered explanation of their lingering existence in early modern society. Haigh has suggested that while this group represented 'a reservoir of potential recusants', they were not always served by the missionary priests in a way that ensured their conversion from occasional conformity.[54] However, Walsham asserts that the religious motives of this group may be more difficult to ascertain. She argues that "church papists" represented a spectrum of different religious behaviours that reflected the variety of different strategies crypto-Catholics could employ.[55]

Given his close association with Catholics, it would seem that Morgan Lewis was not a committed, conservative Anglican, but rather had divorced his Catholic-minded religious identity from his public image as a conformable member of the national Church. The status of such outwardly conformable Catholics within the historiography of those loyal to the Roman Church has been open to debate. However, Walsham makes the important point that discussion of the Catholic population in the century that followed the Elizabethan settlement can become unrepresentative if such

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[52] A. Walsham, *"Church Papists": Catholicism, Conformity and Confessional Polemic in Early Modern England* (Woodbridge, Boydell Press, 1993) pp. 73-75.
[53] Ibid; M. C. Questier, "What Happened to English Catholicism after the Reformation?", *History*, 85, 277, 2000, p. 33
[54] C. Haigh, "The Continuity of Catholicism in the English Reformation", *PP*, 93, 1981, p. 69.
[55] Walsham, *Church Papists*, p. 85.

individuals are simply ignored.[56] Even in regions like northern Monmouthshire where Catholics were relatively numerous and enjoyed greater protection, Catholics drawn from the middling and lower levels of society faced potentially serious financial difficulties if recusancy laws were even sporadically enforced.[57] In these circumstances, it is unsurprising that individuals sought to avoid these eventualities by hiding their religious views. To consider only recusancy as an expression of Catholic identity leads inevitably to an over-representation of the wealthy and confident. Ignoring the tendency of some individuals to subsume their Catholicism also makes it particularly difficult to follow trends of religious identity in families from one generation to the next. In the case of the Lewises, discounting Morgan Lewis' "church papistry" would make it particularly difficult to understand the true origins of the overt Catholicism of his daughter Mary. If the marriage of her parents is taken to be merely religiously mixed, then Mary's religious identity could be misinterpreted as overly influenced by her husband, rather than subtly differing from that in which she had been raised.

The patterns of observance found in the Lewis family raise a number of interesting points about the way in which religious identity and its expression in early society often acted as a point of intersection with notions of gender and familial responsibility. As has been discussed in chapter five, the privatisation of sacred space in Catholic culture had a significant impact on gender relations. In families like the Lewises, where the husband conformed while the wife remained a recusant, the

[56] Ibid, p. 91.

[57] One estimation of the contemporary value of a £20 fine in comparison to average earnings in 1678, places it at the equivalent of £39,200 by 2012 values. For details see http://www.measuringworth.com/ppoweruk/result.php?use%5B%5D=CPI&use%5B%5D=NOMINALEARN&year_early=1678&pound71=20&shilling71=&pence71=&amount=20&year_source=1678&year_result=2013, accessed on 9th Oct 2013.

obedience of the wife to her husband was brought into question in stark fashion.[58] However, as Dolan has suggested, a recusant wife and a church papist husband may not have been at odds at all, but have reached an agreement as to how to manage the family's religious identity.[59] While conflict undoubtedly occurred between couples who were ill-matched in terms of their spirituality, the Lewises appear to have adopted a pragmatic approach that divided their religious duties and allowed the family to remain essentially Catholic, but with some protection against persecution.[60] The patterns of observance that were established in the Lewis family suggest the way in which anti-Catholicism and persecution could influence how Catholics chose to express their religious identity. The anti-Catholic stereotyping and discriminatory laws that were inspired by this political discourse can be seen as having driven Catholics to adapt their religious identity.

As has been outlined in the previous chapter, Social Identity Theory (SIT) has established that the link between positive self-image and social identity has been shown to be strong and can have a significant effect on inter-group relations.[61] In the case of subordinate social groups, the association of negative traits and attributes with the group can have a considerable effect on its members. The need to maintain a positive social identity sometimes drives individuals, who identify or are identified with subordinate groups, to engage in any number of different strategies to regain a positive social identity.[62] Such behaviour can be seen in the patterns of conformity and adherence of the Lewis family. It could be argued that such behaviour is an

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[58] Walsham, *Church Papists*, p. 78.
[59] F. E. Dolan, 'Gender and the "Lost" Spaces of Catholicism', *JIH*, Vol. 32, No. 4, 2002, p. 654.
[60] Walsham, *Church Papists*, p. 78.
[61] H Tajfel and J.C. Turner, "The Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Behaviour", in W. G. Austen and S. Worchel, *Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, 1986, Nelson-Hall Publishers, Chicago, p. 16.
[62] Tajfel and Turner, "The Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Behaviour", p. 20; M. Blanz, A. L. Mummendey, R. Mielke and A. Klink, "Responding to negative social identity: a taxonomy of identity management strategies", *E JSP*, 28, 1998, p. 699.

example of how the religious practices of some Catholic families were shaped and influenced by the negative connotations associated with Catholicism. In analysing the nature of such a response and the meaning of this behaviour in the context of Catholic religious identity, SIT provides a number of useful points. SIT and other theories of intergroup relations categorise the different responses to negative social identity, according to their effect on the individual and the group.[63] Individual responses only seek to change the position of a single subject, with the status relationship between the two groups remaining the same. The attempt by Morgan Lewis to conceal his Catholicism can easily be categorised as an individual response to negative stereotyping, as identified by Tajfel and Turner.[64] Lewis sought to associate himself with a positively evaluated group and distance himself from the undesirable characteristics that had been connected to Catholicism. However, his actions did not seek to address the fundamental relationship between Protestants and Catholics, even at a local level. Instead, Morgan Lewis engaged in a form of assimilation where he was able to pass as an Anglican, while allowing other members of the family to maintain their Catholic religious practices.[65] Furthermore, it seems that this was a practice that was supposed to continue with the next generation by raising one child to also conform.

This concealment of religious identity suggests the degree to which Catholics were affected by the prejudice that had become ingrained in the legal and political culture of early modern society and which could erupt into outright persecution. The Lewises, like many of those who relied on a degree of public support for their livelihoods, were financially vulnerable to the imposition of recusancy laws and were

[63] Tajfel and Turner, "The Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Behaviour", pp. 19-20; Blanz, Mummendey, Mielke and Klink, "Responding to negative social identity", pp. 699-703.
[64] Tajfel and Turner, "The Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Behaviour", pp. 19-20;
[65] Blanz, Mummendey, Mielke and Klink, "Responding to negative social identity", p. 700.

not free to openly express their religious views. Exposure of the true religion of the whole family could have risked outright condemnation and loss of position, even in a more religiously heterogeneous town like Abergavenny. Instead, the Lewises chose to present the head of the family and at least one of their sons as Protestants until the 1630s. However, this system of concealment and pseudo-assimilation did not continue into the next generation of Lewises. In the decades of the Civil War and Interregnum, some of Morgan and Margaret Lewis' children chose to express a more fervent and open form of religious identity. For their son David Lewis, this change was facilitated through the realisation of his vocation. However, his sister, Mary also chose to embrace an overtly Catholic identity, enabled by her marriage to the more socially secure, and perhaps aggressively Catholic, Thomas Gunter II of Cross Street.[66]

The Gunters were a family with a long history in Abergavenny, who came to play a highly significant role in the Catholic culture of the town for much of the mid to late seventeenth century. The Gunters were descended from the Gaunt d'Or family of Breconshire that had arrived with Bernard de Neufmarché, the Norman conqueror of the ancient kingdom of Brecon.[67] While the original family line in Brecon declined, a secondary branch in Abergavenny, descended from Lewis Gunter, continued to prosper.[68] The Abergavenny Gunters had a significant history in practising law. Lewis Gunter's grandson, James, had been a London attorney before raising the family's status through the purchase of the priory of St Mary's and its demesne during the Dissolution of the Monasteries.[69] The main branch of the family was of significant enough status to host the king when he briefly visited the town in 1645.[70] However,

[66] For details see Appendix C; Gunter, "Pedigree of the Family of Gunter of Abergavenny and of London", p. 12.
[67] Bradney, *History of Monmouthshire*, vol. 1, p. 158.
[68] Ibid.
[69] Ibid.
[70] Ibid.

by the late-sixteenth century, a religious split had developed amongst the children of Robert Gunter of The Priory. While Walter Gunter continued the Protestant line, his siblings Thomas, Richard, Margaret and Mary Gunter converted to Catholicism and were convicted of recusancy in 1607-8.[71] Thomas and his descendants resided primarily at the Gunter Mansion, a large property that was located near the town walls in the seventeenth century.[72] Bradney also states that the family owned another property called Westgate on the road between Abergavenny and Llanfoist.[73]

It was into this branch of the Gunter family that Mary Lewis married into the mid-seventeenth century.[74] The Cross Street Gunters did not acquired the same level of social status as their cousins at The Priory. However, they did emerge as one of the most prominent Catholic families in the town. Thomas Gunter I (1569-1657) acted as steward to Pyrs Butler, Lord of the Manor of Wentland and Bryngwyn, while his son trained as an attorney.[75] Despite the fact that the Gunter's were not amongst the first families in Abergavenny, their patterns of employment and association meant that they were connected to some of the most significant Catholic families in the region. The marriage of Pyrs Butler to Mary, the widow of Sir Edward Morgan, meant that the Gunters were also connected through employment to the Morgans of Llantarnum.[76]

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[71] R. P. Matthews, "Roman Catholic Recusancy in Monmouthshire 1608-89: A demographic and morphological analysis", unpublished University of Wales, Cardiff, Ph.D. thesis, 1996, p. 258; Allen, "Catholic records in the attic", p. 19.
[72] Knight, "A Nonconformity of the Gentry?", p. 148.
[73] Bradney, *History of Monmouthshire*, vol. 1, p. 158.
[74] Significant confusion has arisen over which member of the Gunter family Mary Lewis married. This seems to have resulted from the fact that three generations of the Gunter men at Cross Street were named Thomas. Furthermore, the lack of a clear birth date for Mary makes it more difficult to establish who her husband was. While Canning and Bradney have argued that she was married to Thomas Gunter I, son of Robert, a more recent investigation by a member of the Gunter family, G. W. Gunter has pointed towards her being the wife of Thomas Gunter II. Given that she died in 1676, this seems a far more likely scenario, as Thomas Gunter I was described as elderly in the 1640s. The marital arrangements proposed by Gunter are followed in this thesis. For details see Appendices C and I. NLW Joseph Herbert Canning, MS 17, p. 27; Bradney, *History of Monmouthshire*, vol. 1, p. 158; Gunter, "Pedigree of the Family of Gunter of Abergavenny and of London", p. 12.
[75] Abergavenny Museum, Gunter, MS 22a; Bradney, *History of Monmouthshire*, vol. 1, p. 469.
[76] Bradney, *History of Monmouthshire*, vol. 1, p. 469.

Furthermore, in 1641, Thomas Gunter II was reportedly found in Worcester House during a raid on the Somersets' London residence.[77] Given these connections to wealthy and powerful Catholic families, it is perhaps surprising that the Gunters failed to become involved in the political turmoil that engulfed England in the middle of the century. Like many Catholics in Monmouthshire, neither Thomas Gunter I nor his son supported the king, despite the extensive support given to the Royalist cause by the marquess of Worcester.[78] However, regardless of the family's political neutrality, the Gunter's religious allegiances still led to their estates being sequestered by Parliament. Deemed religious delinquents, the Gunters, like other Catholics across England and Wales, found themselves under considerable economic pressure as the government took control of their assets.[79] Some allowances were made through appeals for consideration of the age and frailty of Thomas Gunter I at the time, and he was allowed to remain in the family home in Cross Street.[80] However, by 1655, Gunter was reported to be £12 in arrears on the rent for his Abergavenny home, suggesting that the family struggled under the burden of sequestration.[81]

Despite these difficulties, the family maintained their loyalty to the Roman Church, and the recusant practices begun by Thomas Gunter I were maintained by his son, Thomas Gunter II. Thomas Gunter II also continued in the traditional family profession being trained as an attorney. However, he did not seem to feel compelled to obey the law when it came to his religious practices. Under his control, the family home in Cross Street became a significant point of access to priests and the sacraments

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[77] J. McCann and H. Connelly (eds), *Memorials of Fr Augustine Baker (1575-1641) and other Records relating to the English Benedictines*, 1933, Catholic Record Society, London; NLW, Martin Cleary, MS 19; Anon., *A new Plot against the Parliament. Englands Deliverance. Or a true and great Discoverie Of a horrible and bloudy Treason And Conspiracie* (London, 1641), sig. A3.
[78] R. Matthews, "'To a man for the King': The Allegiance of Welsh Catholics during the First Civil War, 1642-46", *PHCC*, 20/21, 2000/2001, pp. 90-6.
[79] AM, Gunter MSS, A44-61.
[80] Ibid.
[81] Allen, "Catholic records in the attic", p. 21.

for local Catholics. It was he who constructed a chapel in the attic of the Cross Street mansion. The chapel occupied a small room located in the eaves of the house.[82] It is important to note that while this was not a private chapel in the style seen in the homes of the wealthiest Catholics, it was a delineated sacred space that was widely known as a chapel.[83]

The importance of this room was made clear by the decorations that had been lavished upon it. When the chapel was rediscovered during the restoration of the mansion in 1912, it was found that the chapel contained significant decoration. A reredos mural depicting the Adoration of the Magi appears to have acted as an altarpiece, while the remains of a painted depiction of the Sacred Heart, accompanied by the Cross of Christ and the letters IHS could be seen on the facing wall over the window.[84] While only the altarpiece has survived into the present-day, it was also reported in 1678 that the chapel was also decorated externally with 'the publick mark of the Jesuites'.[85] Such graphic markings of the room were clear indicators of its status as sacred space, but also made statements about the religious identity of the Gunter family. Clearly, this room was set aside as an important sacred space that could be used by the family and other Catholics to observe the sacraments, a place in which their identity as Catholics could be openly, even aggressively, stated.

Surprisingly, this chapel appears not to have drawn considerable much criticism until the 1670s.[86] According to reports produced during this time, the chapel served not only as a facility for the Gunters' private worship, but also as an effectively

[82] Photographs of the location and current state of the chapel can be found in plates 1-5.
[83] Sir John Trevor, *An Abstract of Several Examinations Taken upon Oath, in the Counties of Monmouth and Hereford* (London, 1680) p. 8.
[84] Photographs of the mural and the positions that these artworks occupied can be found in photographic plates 3, 5 and 7.
[85] Trevor, *An Abstract of Several Examinations Taken upon Oath*, p. 8.
[86] Allen, "Catholic records in the attic", p.17.

public institution for the Catholic community. Both John Arnold and the vicar of Abergavenny stated that they had seen numerous Catholics attending services at the Gunter chapel, and that it was even used to perform christenings, marriage ceremonies and funerals.[87] The fact that the Gunter Mansion was located nearly opposite the parish church at that time, and that the entrance to the chapel was an external staircase, suggests the degree to which Thomas Gunter II appeared to be rather unconcerned at his neighbours' reactions to his religious activities.[88] The chapel was served by at least two Jesuits. Unsurprisingly, one of these was named as Thomas Gunter's brother-in-law, David Lewis, head of the mission at the Cwm. The chapel was also said to be frequented by Philip Evans who, like Lewis, would be martyred in the outburst of anti-popery that accompanied the Popish Plot in Wales.[89] The maintenance of priests in the home seemed to have been a longstanding arrangement for the Gunters. Thomas Gunter II went so far as to openly state to John Arnold in the 1670s that he had entertained and sheltered priests since 'Olivers time of severity' and that he would continue to do so.[90]

The operation of a semi-public Jesuit chapel in the Gunters' attic with its decoration and importance to the wider Catholic community was indicative of the family's openness about their religious identity. The religious practices of the Gunter household were markedly different to those observed by the Lewises. Despite the familial connection created by the marriage of Mary Lewis and Thomas Gunter II, the Gunters rejected religious conformity. Rather than feeling the need to conceal his religious identity in the fashion of Morgan Lewis, Thomas Gunter II chose instead to

[87] Ibid, pp. 8-9.
[88] Photographs of the location of the chapel in relation to the parish church and the entrance to the chapel are shown in photographic plates 10 and 11.
[89] Trevor, *An Abstract of Several Examinations*, p. 8.
[90] Ibid, pp. 8-9.

display it openly, in a provocative manner. It could be suggested that the chapel represented a clear and undeniable statement of his identity as a recusant Catholic, and his support of others that sought to maintain their allegiance to the Roman Church. The decoration of the chapel with murals above the altar and windows, meant that it was impossible to hide the purpose of the room if the house had been searched. Despite the existence of priest-holes in the Gunter mansion, Thomas Gunter did not appear to feel the need to protect himself or his family from the repercussions that would have arisen from the discovery of such clear evidence of their accommodating priests in their home.[91]

It could be argued that the decorations themselves also provide insight into the way in which the Gunters expressed their Catholic identity. The altarpiece of the Gunter chapel raises many questions about both its meaning as a functional and symbolic expression of Catholic identity, as well as the mystery that surrounds its creation. The visual arts had occupied a prominent position in Christian cultural life since the earliest days of the Church. However, the establishment of a Protestant English Church in the sixteenth century and the religious upheavals of the mid-seventeenth century, saw the removal and destruction of many of the ornate decorations in public sacred spaces. While those choosing to remain loyal to Rome removed and hid some religious images and objects, many of them were destroyed in Wales. The sacred statue of the Virgin from Penrhys and the large statue of St Derfel at Llanderfel were both publicly burned in London during the Henrician Reformation, while windows and ornaments at the shrine of St Winifred in North Wales had been defaced by Parliamentarian soldiers.[92] In the wake of this iconoclasm, some Catholics

[91] A photograph of one of the priest-holes found in the Gunter mansion is shown in photographic plate 8.

[92] P. Marshall, "Papist As Heretic: The Burning of John Forest, 1538", *HJ*, 41, 2, 1998, p. 356; T. John and N. Rees, *Pilgrimage: A Welsh Perspective*, Gomer, Llandysul, p. 114; C. M. Seguin, "Cures

sought to use imported, or clandestinely produced religious images as a means of recreating the sacred spaces that they had lost. However, for the majority of Catholics these images tended to be cheaply produced engravings or paintings on cloth and paper, which could easily be concealed from their Protestant neighbours or the authorities. Richer Catholics could afford to maintain private chapels, some of which were decorated with carvings and artwork.[93] The Gunters can perhaps be seen as occupying a position between these two extremes. Their chapel was clearly a permanent feature in their home, but the decorations it contained were not of high quality as seen in the private religious spaces of the Catholic aristocracy. Nor did it contain the prized relics of medieval churches saved from destruction, but specially commissioned decorations. The question of how such decorations came to be in the Gunter household and where they may have found an artist willing to paint them, is intriguing and will most likely never be answered. However, Cleary has speculated that the connection between Thomas Gunter and the Somersets that was in evidence in 1641, might have provided the opportunity for contacts to be developed between this provincial Catholic family and artists capable of producing such illicit paintings.[94]

The nature of the reredos altarpiece can also be seen as a powerful statement of Catholic identity in a society that had fundamentally rejected notions of transubstantiation, and excluded Catholics from public religious observance. The inclusion of artistic depictions of the lives of the saints, the Virgin and the life of Christ had been part of the tradition of altarpieces since their emergence in the medieval

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and Controversy in Early Modern Wales: The Struggle to Control St. Winifred's Well", *NAJWS*, 3, 2, 2003, p. 16.

[93] R. Williams, "Cultures of dissent: English Catholics and the visual arts", in B. Kaplan, B. Moore, H. Van Nierop and J. Pollmann (eds), *Catholic Communities in Protestant States: Britain and the Netherlands c.1570-1720* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2009) pp. 232-238.

[94] NLW, Martin Cleary, MS 19.

period.[95] Various interpretations have been proposed to explain the meaning and importance of these images within Catholic culture. While some art historians have rejected the notion that the statuary and paintings that began to appear around altars in the middle ages have a deeper meaning, others have argued that consideration of the purpose of altarpieces reveals the symbolism of these artworks.[96] The altarpiece draws the congregation's attention to the Eucharistic performance that lies at the heart of the Mass, acting to remind the viewer of the sacrifice of Christ for humanity and the recurrence of this miracle during the Catholic service.[97] In emphasising the altarpiece as a functional object, the choice of subject matter in the Gunter Chapel's decorations can be seen as referring symbolically to the body and blood of Christ. The choice of the Adoration of the Magi for the altarpiece can also be read in this way. Nilgen suggests that the image of the Nativity and the Magi reflect the Eucharist through the symbolism of the manger as the altar, while the incarnation of God as a human child represents the transformation of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ.[98]

While this analysis has focused on the medieval and Renaissance altarpieces of mainland Europe, the notion that such artistic depictions of Christ and his life symbolically reflected the rituals that took place in these sacred spaces, can still be examined in the context of post-Reformation Wales. The Gunter's small chapel represented a crucial means of not only accessing the sacraments of the Roman Church, but also of expressing the family's identity as recusant Catholics. It functioned as a space in which the conformity demanded by the Protestant state could be rejected in favour of Catholic worship, often administered by a priest. In this

[95] B. Williamson, "Altarpieces, Liturgy, and Devotion", *Speculum*, 79, 2, 2004, pp. 355-356.
[96] Ibid, pp. 343-352.
[97] Ibid, pp. 343-346.
[98] U. Nilgen, trans. by R. Franciscono, "The Epiphany and the Eucharist: On the Interpretation of Eucharistic Motifs in Mediaeval Epiphany Scenes", *AB*, Vol. 49, No. 4 (Dec., 1967), pp. 314-316.

context the Eucharistic metaphor of the Magi depicted in the altarpiece took on a powerful meaning. Its presence in the chapel demonstrated the Gunter's refutation of the Anglican interpretation of the communion, and their adherence to the miracle of the Mass.

The depiction of the Sacred Heart on the facing wall of the chapel also acted as a powerful statement of the Gunters' Catholic identity. It could be argued that it reflected the inter-linking of lay identity with that of the priests that ministered in Catholic households. The symbol of the Sacred Heart became closely associated with the Jesuits, through their practice of placing the symbol on the title pages of their texts and on the walls of their churches.[99] Equally, the fact that the Sacred Heart represents the long-suffering dedication and love of Christ for humanity can also be seen as a reflection of contemporary identification between the Catholics of the British Isles and the martyrdom of Christ. McClain has argued that the identity of English Catholics became significantly associated with conceptions of martyrdom and persecution, particularly that of the early Christians and Christ himself.[100] The painting of the Sacred Heart on the opposite wall to the altarpiece in the Gunter chapel can be seen as an expression not only of the Jesuit nature of the space, but also as a visual reminder of Christ's martyrdom and persecution in order to redeem humanity.

The Gunter chapel not only played an important role in the private devotions of the family, but also became a significant part of the history of Catholicism in the region. Allowing Catholics from around Abergavenny to use the chapel and attend Mass shows the Gunters' concern to facilitate other members of their community to have regular access to priests and the sacraments they provided.[101] In the relatively

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[99] J. Bainvel, "Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus", *Catholic Encyclopaedia*, accessed at http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07163a.htm, 25th May 2012.
[100] McClain, *Lest we be Damned*, pp. 238-239.
[101] Trevor, *An Abstract of Several Examinations*, p. 8.

tolerant era of the 1660s such gatherings seem to have had little real effect on the Protestant community. However, as tensions between Protestants and Catholics on the Welsh Marches grew in the 1670s, Thomas Gunter II seems to have become confrontational to the point of deliberately goading an antagonistic John Arnold. His boasting of keeping priests under the Cromwellian regime, and his near open entertainment of priests in the 1670s, seem to have inflamed the already intolerant attitudes of men like Arnold, who resented the prominence of Catholics in the region.[102] However, Gunter's confidence in his ability to remain unpunished for his flouting of the restrictions of Catholic worship must have been dented by the events that were to occur in the aftermath of the Popish Plot. The free rein to track down priests that was given to Arnold and his accomplices, who included the Gunters' own kinsman, Thomas Price of Llanfoist, had a catastrophic impact on the Catholic community in northern Monmouthshire.[103] All the priests that had ministered to the congregations gathered at the Gunters' chapel were executed, and the Jesuit mission devastated by such losses. The pope-burning that took place in Abergavenny in 1679 also marked a turning point in the security of the Catholic population to practice their faith with limited toleration. In a pamphlet produced to describe the event, it was said that the parade arranged by Arnold, wended its way through the town and identified the houses of Catholics, the mock pope being carried to each of them and made to bow outside.[104] Given the history between Thomas Gunter II and Arnold, it seems likely that his home in Cross Street was amongst those targeted.

At some unknown point in the closing decades of the seventeenth century, Thomas Gunter II and his second wife, Catherine, left the Cross Street mansion and

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[102] Trevor, *An Abstract of Several Examinations*, pp. 8-9.
[103] Charles Price was a cousin of Thomas Gunter II. For details of the connection between the Gunters and the Prices, see Appendix F.
[104] Anon., *The Popes Down-fall, At Abergavenny* (London, 1679) p. 4.

moved to Frogmore Street.[105] The mansion passed to another Catholic member of the family, Richard Gunter, Thomas' nephew, whom he had tutored for a number of years. While the reasons for this move are unknown, it seems significant that it occurred after the complete destruction of the Jesuit mission that had ministered from the chapel, and the deaths of so many of its priests, one of which was Gunter's own brother-in-law. While the house in Cross Street remained in the hands of the family, the chapel was sealed up and its entrance concealed. Despite these significant personal losses, Thomas and Catherine Gunter continued to remain significant recusants in the town, supporting the new Franciscan mission that was created in the 1680s. Thomas Gunter II and his son, Thomas Gunter III, were both noted for recusancy, the latter convicted in the early 1700s.[106] However, the tragedies of the late 1670s do seem to have changed how the family sought to express their religious identity, moving away from the inflammatory fashion in which it was expressed in the chapel in Cross Street.

The recusant Catholic identity that was evident in the Gunter household was markedly different to the conformity exhibited by other Catholics. However, this more explicit statement of Catholicism can be seen to have been shaped to a considerable extent by the persecution and negative stereotyping that accompanied anti-popery. Instead of attempting to assimilate within Protestant society, the Gunters chose to embrace their Catholicism and practice in a much more open and confrontational manner. Tajfel and Turner identified that some individuals might choose to respond to the problem of negative social identity in this kind of overt manner by attempting

[105] The exact site of this house is unknown, but it would seem that the Gunters had lived in the street for many years previously. Thomas Gunter II's relations were reported as resident in the street in their recusancy conviction in 1607-1608; National Archives, E377/14-15, cited in the in Allen, "Catholic records in the attic", p. 18. For a picture of modern day Frogmore Street near the supposed location of the house, see plate 37. P. Jenkins, "'A Welsh Lancashire'? Monmouthshire Catholics in the Eighteenth Century", *RH*, 15, 1980, p. 180.

[106] Allen, "Catholic records in the attic", p. 17-9.

to raise the status of the subordinate group as a whole.[107] Such activities can include the re-categorisation of points of comparison between the dominant and subordinate groups, turning the attributes that are deemed negative into positive reflections on those who are subjugated.[108] The Gunters' opening of their private chapel for the use of local Catholics suggests the degree to which this family also sought to challenge the position that Catholics as a community occupied in the town. Rather than accept the loss of their sacred spaces and their right to public worship, the Gunters appear to have established their own chapel almost as a challenge to the parish church. Located physically almost opposite the church, the Gunter chapel was reported to attract significantly more attendees, to the irritation of the local vicar.[109] The decoration of the chapel also expressed a clear rejection of the negative stereotyping of Catholics as superstitious for their belief in transubstantiation and their inclusion of images in the visual culture of their religion. In deliberately drawing attention to the altar, on which the transformative miracle took place, the Gunter altarpiece indicated the fundamental importance and redemptive nature of this definitively Catholic belief. Furthermore, the inclusion of the Sacred Heart and the Cross as decorations reminded those attending the chapel of the martyrdom of Christ, linking their persecution by a Protestant state to that experienced by Christians separated by many thousands of miles and more than a millennium.

While the conformity and recusancy of the Lewis and Gunter families can be seen as representing the extremes of religious practice in the lay community, their experiences reflect the wider influences that shaped Catholic identity in this period. While

[107] Tajfel and Turner, "The Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Behaviour", pp. 19-20.
[108] Ibid.
[109] Trevor, *An Abstract of Several Examinations*, pp. 8-9.

Catholic identity was built around the interactions between Catholics, it was also shaped by relations with the Protestants, at both a local and national level.

Both the Lewis and Gunter families sought to preserve the overall loyalty of the family unit to the Roman Church. However, their expression of this religious identity differed significantly, reflecting the real dilemmas that faced Catholics in an era when even local patterns of toleration could be overridden by national events. While the town of Abergavenny appears to have been unusually tolerant of its significant Catholic population, the vulnerability of Catholics to the enforcement of anti-popish laws meant that many had to be guarded in their expression of their religious identity. The Lewises, occupying a professional position in society, were particularly vulnerable to backlashes against Catholic influence. Throughout the mid-seventeenth century, Morgan Lewis' attempts to present an image of conformity, belied the reality of the family's actual religious life. Interestingly, in tracing the development of the family through the Interregnum and into the later seventeenth century, it would appear that outward compliance to the state's requirements did not inevitably mean a collapse into acquiescence and parish Anglicanism. In contrast, this family produced a leading member of the clergy and at least one daughter who chose to embrace recusancy during her marriage into the Gunters. This more overt expression of Catholicism has perhaps been seen as a more extreme, even braver, statement of Catholic identity. However, close examination of the lives of the Gunter family suggest that their religious behaviour was shaped by anti-Catholicism and negative social identity in a manner as significant, if different, to the Lewises. While the Lewises were reliant on the acceptance of the community to maintain their professional position, as attorneys the Gunters were more able to embrace a vociferous approach to their religious life. Even in their apparently private chapel, the Gunters

appear to have sought to challenge the negative connotations that had been associated with their religious beliefs.

However, despite their occasionally provocative reaction to the anti-Catholicism of some of their neighbours, the Gunters did not emerge unscathed from the trauma of the later seventeenth century. The closure of the chapel at Cross Street, and the relocation of part of the family to Frogmore Street may have reflected the considerable changes taking place in the Catholic community in Wales. What both families showed was the degree to which the construction of religious identity amongst the laity was not a process that occurred in isolation from the wider society in which Catholics lived. It reflected the relationships between Catholics, which could range from the professional to the educational, and often the familial. It also reflected the equally complex connections that Catholics shared with their Protestant neighbours in a small and close-knit society. Such relations could be cordial, even surprisingly lenient. However, such peaceful co-existence often proved fragile.[110] As was shown through the significant ramifications of the Popish Plot on these two families, Catholics could not escape the effect of the national political discourse of anti-popery. When such fears erupted they could awaken long dormant local tensions, cracking the delicate veneer of toleration to reveal distrust and discord.

[110] Walsham, *Church Papists*, pp. 228-287

Chapter Seven
Re-examining Welsh Catholicism

The focus of this thesis has been the experiences and interactions of Catholics during a period of considerable political and social change. While the closing decades of the seventeenth century witnessed economic, political and cultural developments that would mark the transition into the modern age, early modern England and Wales were still societies riven by the religious divisions of the Reformation. Anglicanism had become firmly established in the hearts and minds of the majority of the laity and its position as the official religion of the State seemed increasingly assured. However, the continued existence of significant religious minorities meant that sectarian conflict remained a threat to social and political stability right to the end of this turbulent century. The aim of this thesis was to explore and illuminate the cultural practices, psychological perspectives and social position of one such minority group located on the western fringes of Europe.

The history of Catholics in Wales during the later seventeenth century raises a number of important points about the country's religious landscape in the early modern period. Though focused in specific geographical areas, Wales possessed a significantly large Catholic population, which survived into the modern era. Catholics formed distinct communities within Welsh society, and in some areas, had such a considerable presence that they came to play an important political role. Along the Welsh-English border, Catholics continued to practice their religion, operating private chapels and attending ancient shrines, served by missionary priests drawn from both secular and religious orders. Though this distinct community did not play as prominent a role in modern Welsh religious culture as Dissenting communities, Catholics did prove a source of enduring controversy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The

experiences of Catholics and their relations with Protestants, both Anglican and Dissenting, suggest the degree to which seventeenth-century Wales was a society undergoing considerable change. Contemporary political and economic concerns and conflicts became intermingled with older religious conflicts creating a volatile social climate where remarkable toleration could exist alongside violent persecution.

The degree to which Catholics constituted a distinct religious community within early modern Wales has, to an extent, remained hidden within the historiography of the region. This thesis sought to challenge the notion that lingering Catholicism was produced by the survival of medieval thinking, superstition and religious ignorance amongst the people of Wales. A major consideration was the extent to which Catholicism in Wales could be understood as reflecting genuine conviction rather than simply the best alternative in a region neglected by the Anglican Church. It also endeavoured to address the problem of the sense of inevitable failure that has infiltrated investigations of Catholic history in the region. The decline of Catholicism in the aftermath of the Reformation seems to have created the impression in some of the older Welsh historiography that the region's Catholic history is a narration of a declining force, whose relevance to modern Welsh culture lies in immigrant communities rather than contemporary native spirituality.[1]

More recent scholarship by historians from outside of Wales and from local specialists has challenged these assumptions and drawn attention to important issues of identity and culture.[2] It was these aspects of Catholic history that were focused

[1] G. Williams, "Wales and the Reformation", in his *Welsh Reformation Essays* (Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 1967) pp. 11-17, 20-21; G. Williams, "Unity of Religion or Unity of Language? Protestants and Catholics and the Welsh Language, 1536-1660", in G. H. Jenkins, *The Foundations of Modern Wales, 1642-1780* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1993) pp. 208-9; G. Williams, *Wales and the Reformation* (Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 1997) p. 27.

[2] P. Jenkins, "'A Welsh Lancashire'? Monmouthshire Catholics in the Eighteenth Century", *RH*, 15, 1980, pp. 176-188; J. K. Knight, "'From the Welsh Good Lord Deliver Me': soldiers, papists and civilians in Civil War Monmouthshire", *AC*, 151, 2002, pp. 1-18; A. Walsham, 'Miracles and the Counter-Reformation Mission to England', *HJ*, 46, 4, 2003, pp. 779-815; L. McClain, *Lest We Be*

upon in this thesis. Most prominently, this thesis sought to explore how concepts of identity, community and belief interacted with and were shaped by shared religious experience, as well as relations with other religious groups in early modern Wales. Rather than being influenced by the decline of native Catholicism in the later eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, this thesis sought to evaluate and examine the fortunes of Catholics in their own social and political environment. It also suggested that the experiences of this apparently marginal group could still speak in a relevant fashion to a modern Wales that faces the challenge of increasing religious, political and social diversity.

At first glance, the Catholic communities that lingered beyond the Reformation in Wales might appear to be marginal both geographically and socially. Like earlier local and regional studies, this thesis focused upon the counties that lie along the border with England due to the concentration of Catholics in these areas.[3] Such localisation might suggest that Catholics played only a limited role in the nation's religious history, having little impact on wider patterns of Welsh spirituality. However, such a view of Welsh Catholicism fails to provide answers to a number of important questions. How was this large Catholic community structured? What links existed between those Catholics living in Wales and other communities living across the British Isles? Had

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Damned: Practical Innovation and Lived Experience among Catholics in Protestant England, 1559-1642 (London, Routledge, 2004) pp. 234, 236-237; J. K. Knight, "A Nonconformity of the Gentry? Catholic Recusancy in Seventeenth-Century Abergavenny", *MA*, 20, 2004, pp. 145-152; R. L. Williams, "Forbidden Sacred Spaces in Reformation England" in A. Spicer and S. Hamilton (ed.), *Defining the holy: sacred space in medieval and early modern Europe* (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2005) pp. 95-112; A. Walsham, "Holywell: contesting sacred space in post-Reformation Wales", in ibid, pp. 211-236; A. Walsham, *Charitable Hatred: Tolerance and intolerance in England, 1500-1700* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2006) pp. 101-112.

[3] P. Jenkins, "'A Welsh Lancashire'? Monmouthshire Catholics in the Eighteenth Century", *RH*, 15, 1980, pp.176-188; P. Jenkins, "Anti-popery on the Welsh Marches in the seventeenth century", *HJ*, 23, 1980, pp. 275-293; Knight, "A Nonconformity of the Gentry?, pp. 145-152; J. K. Knight, "'From the Welsh Good Lord Deliver Me', pp. 1-18.

any form of toleration developed with the established Anglican and burgeoning Dissenting populations they lived alongside? To what extent were the concepts of identity and community amongst Catholics, as well as the cultural expression of their beliefs, shaped by their interaction with their Protestant neighbours and the state in this turbulent period?

The political and social changes that occurred in the Catholic community in the second half of the seventeenth century, bring these questions into sharp focus. However, while questions about the nature of identity, community and belief have been raised in the historiography of English and European Catholicism, such ideas have not been applied in a Welsh context. This thesis sought to answer some of these points and recognise the cultural and social complexity of Catholic life into the late seventeenth century. Rather than focusing on the immediate impact of the Reformation and its uneven progress in Wales, this thesis examined the way in which the community developed after the Restoration. It suggested that rather than seeing the devastation of the South Wales mission in the 1670s and the effect of the 1688 Revolution as marking the last gasp of native Catholicism as a significant religious force in Wales, the years 1660-1700 were a period of transition rather than decline for this community. Tentative examination of the data produced by the magistrates in 1706 on the numbers of Catholics living in the county would suggest that Catholics remained surprisingly numerous into the eighteenth century.[4]

As with many aspects of research into communities and cultures that are engaged in illegal activities, consideration of the nature of the Catholic community in Wales presented a number of clear challenges in establishing who constituted the

[4] NLW Church in Wales: Diocese of St Davids Episcopal 3, MSS SD/RC 1-20; NLW Tredegar 7, MSS 93/53-56; NLW Tredegar 7, MSS 93/58-59.

community and how they operated. It was also necessary to consider how representative those that do appear in the written record were of the community as whole. The fact that manuscript materials relating to the community are limited in nature has inevitably meant that the perspective of literate and wealthier Catholics tend to dominate understandings of this community.

However, in considering the social, genealogical and cultural bonds that were shared by Catholics in both North and South Wales, a surprisingly diverse community begins to emerge. In both these regions, families and individuals were connected through marriage, employment, patronage and shared religious experiences, often extended vertically through the social orders as well as between those of the same status.[5] While seigneurial bonds undoubtedly played crucial roles in maintaining Catholic populations around centres like Raglan and Welshpool, such social connections cannot be seen as the sole basis upon which the Welsh Catholic community was built. In towns like Abergavenny or the important shrine of Holywell, wealthy families did play a significant role in the maintenance of Catholicism. However, they were not dominated by any single family, and none were of the social status comparable with the marquesses of Worcester.

Furthermore, even when considering the patterns of allegiance found in communities that were more closely interlinked with the Catholic aristocracy, it is important to consider the degree to which such communities were an evolving and shifting social group, with changing patterns of political allegiance. Viewing the communities of the South Wales Marches as the product of seigneurial allegiances would fail to account for the decided lack of political unity amongst Catholics in Monmouthshire in the crisis of the Civil War, despite the fervent Royalism of the

[5] For the connections between Monmouthshire's gentry and aristocratic families, see appendices A-I.

Somersets.[6] The political alliances that were formed in the 1670s cannot be simply interpreted as the product of Henry Somerset's influence, as his conflicts with the Protestant gentry of the region were economic and political in nature. His conversion to Anglicanism meant that he had little interest in promoting Catholicism in the manner of his grandfather. The ability of some Catholic gentlemen to exploit Somerset's need for political support to further their own religious ends suggests a more complex relationship had developed between the aristocracy and the gentry in this region by the later seventeenth century.

While seigneurial connections between the wealthiest Catholics and their dependents, servants and tenants may not have been the most significant factor in determining the development of Catholicism in the Principality, Welsh Catholics were closely connected in many different ways. Such bonds could also extend across the border into England. The concentration of Welsh Catholics in the Marches meant that intermarriage with those living in England were common given the concentrations in neighbouring counties. As well as intermarrying with Catholics living in Herefordshire and Cheshire, connections were also maintained with families from Lancashire and London.[7] Such widespread family networks suggest that while the Welsh Catholic community might have been located in a region of the British Isles that could be regarded as economically underdeveloped and sometimes socially unreconstructed, Catholics were far from isolated.

As well as forming bonds with those who shared their beliefs and religious views, Welsh Catholics could not remain socially remote from the Protestant communities that surrounded them. Throughout this thesis, I have suggested that to

[6] R. Matthews, "'To a man for the King': The Allegiance of Welsh Catholics during the First Civil War, 1642-46", *PHCC*, 20/21, 2000/2001, pp. 90-6.
[7] For details of these connections amongst Welsh families, see Appendices E, F, G and I. For connections between Welsh and English Catholics, see Appendices A, B and D.

regard Catholics as being able to socially *and* religiously segregate themselves from early modern society, fails to represent the reality of life in a region of the British Isles that remained nearly entirely agrarian. In such circumstances, social interaction between Catholics and Protestants was an economic necessity. Furthermore, it would appear that in those parts of Wales where Catholics represented a significant minority, their presence in positions of social influence were tolerated and even supported by members of the Anglican community. The fact that reputable members of the local gentry were willing to attest to the suitability of the Abergavenny headmaster, Lewis Morgan, when he was reported to Parliament for his Catholicism, betrays a remarkable degree of tolerance.[8] Moreover, the fact that such small revenues were collected from recusants in areas like Monmouthshire, are also indicative of periods of surprisingly peaceful coexistence between the Protestant and Catholic communities.[9] Equally unexpected were the suggestions that also emerged from Monmouthshire that such tolerance across the religious divide was not merely the product of economic or social necessity. That stories of cross confessional friendship emerged from the narrative of a leading Jesuit, relating to the man responsible for his arrest, trial and subsequent execution, reveals the degree to which relations between Catholics and Protestants in this region were more complex than would first appear.[10] Even in North Wales, the operation of a virtually public Catholic shrine at Holywell is indicative of the way in which members of the local Anglican elite were prepared to abide Catholic activities.[11] The willingness of some Catholics to report on the activities of their co-religionists to

[8] *CJ*, "10th June 1626", vol. 1, 1547-1629, 1802, pp. 869-870, http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=1883&strquery=suspected recusant, accessed 6th April 2012.
[9] *CJ*, "29th April", vol. 9, 1667-1687, 1802, pp. 464-471, accessed at http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=27610&strquery=466, 18th January 2012.
[10] St. David Lewis, *A Narrative of the Imprisonment and Tryal of Mr. David Lewis, Priest of the Society of Jesus* (London, 1679) p. 1.
[11] C. M. Seguin, "Cures and Controversy in Early Modern Wales: The Struggle to Control St. Winifred's Well", *NAJWS*, Vol. 3, No. 2, 2003, pp. 1-17.

the authorities, also suggests the degree to which Catholics were prepared to act in an apparently traitorous fashion in order to preserve this tolerance.[12]

The systems of acceptance and leniency that seemed to have been established in parts of Wales by the mid-seventeenth century are important to acknowledge, particularly given the savage persecution that erupted in the 1670s and later tensions of the 1680s. These events can create the impression that Catholics were a people besieged by persecution. Such a view would lead to a misapprehension of both inter-group relations and the experiences of Catholics in Wales. Such changes have major implications for the way in which identity, community and patterns of religious behaviour amongst the Catholic communities were shaped by their interaction with other religious groups. Identity, community and belief systems are far from new topics within the fields of cultural and social history. However, in this study there was a need to understand how Welsh Catholics emerged as a distinct early modern minority group, and how Catholic identity was formed by community bonds in an environment of intermittent persecution. In order to understand these complex and inter-related issues, a new approach to the study of identity and religious culture in the past was required. Instead of viewing identity only through the historical disciplinary viewpoint, I sought to provide a deeper theoretical perspective on the fundamental links between concepts of sameness and otherness, the notion of an imposed negative social identity and the cultural expressions of faith and belief that were observed by Catholics.

Psychological theories have been used by historians seeking to develop greater insight into the most extreme examples of human behaviour in the past. However, this psychohistorical research has overwhelmingly focused on psychoanalytical theories, rather than cognitive-behavioural, developmental or social psychological approaches.

[12] Ibid, pp. 10-16.

While psychoanalysis has suggested a number of alternative explanations for social conflict and individual crisis in past societies, its use has also attracted much criticism.[13] There are real limitations to the applicability of psychoanalytical theories by historians, but the suggestion that application of any social scientific explanations should be avoided by historians because of the fundamental difference between human societies in the present and the past, seems to overlook the nuance and complexity of such theories. Psychology as a discipline aims to uncover the wider patterns in human behaviour that can be applied across societies, viewing humanity as sharing common physiological, emotional and cognitive attributes.

In this thesis, I utilised social psychological theories that had been applied to many different examples of intergroup conflict in a wide range of cultures from the 1960s to the present. To suggest that significant cultural and social differences cannot be accounted for in such research appears to ignore variations in the contemporary world. It also appears to suggest that religious, political or ethnic groups should be considered in different ways by historians. This has serious implications for historians considering the treatment of minority groups and their analysis of social psychological phenomena like prejudice, intergroup relations and identity. The notion that prejudice affected early modern Catholics in a different way to minorities in the present or in other past societies seems to arise not from objective consideration of social or cultural differences, but from a fundamental misunderstanding of the underlying psychology of social relationships. Social psychological research has posited a number of

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[13] P. Loewenberg, *Decoding the Past: The Psychohistorical Approach* New York, Knopf, 1983 (1969)) pp. 97-204.
F. Weinstein and G. M. Platt, "History and Theory: The Question of Psychoanalysis", *JIH*, 2, 4, 1972, pp. 419-434; Idem, "The Coming Crisis in Psychohistory", *JMH*, 47, 2, 1975, 202-228; F. Weinstein, "Psychohistory and the Crisis of the Social Sciences", *HT*, 34, 4, 1995, pp. 299-319; T. G. Ashplant, "Fantasy, Narrative, Event: Psychoanalysis and History", *HWJ*, 23, 1, 1987, pp. 165-73.

important insights into the way in which identity is significantly shaped by social relationships and helps to locate the individual within their social world. Furthermore, the concepts of similarity and otherness arising from comparison between social groups have a crucial effect on the development of social identity.

When these findings are applied to the social circumstances of early modern Welsh Catholics, the importance of the wider relations between Catholics and Protestants became clear. The effect of living in close proximity to Protestants and the inherent anti-Catholicism of English political culture and the state, were an aspect of Catholic identity that had not been fully explored by historians in Wales. While the sense of social unity created through the shared religious practices and experiences of Catholics living within the same region appear to have created a sense of sameness for members of the community, their perception of difference to the Protestant culture also played a significant role in unifying a sometimes disparate group.[14] The increasing resentment of Protestants towards the large Catholic presence in South Wales and the community's influence in the region's politics in the 1670s, seems to have coincided with the emergence of an increasingly provocative stance by some Catholics and church papists.[15] The decision of some Catholic families to allow their menfolk to conform publically while maintaining their true faith in private, is further evidence of the degree to which Catholics shaped their religious practices and the expression of their identity in response to the attitudes and behaviours that they encountered from their Protestant neighbours and the state.[16]

Utilising Realistic Conflict and Social Identity Theory (RCT and SIT), the connections between Catholic identity and anti-Catholicism become clearer. RCT

[14] Anon., *The Catholick Mirrour* (London, 1662).
[15] Sir John Trevor, *An Abstract of Several Examinations Taken upon Oath in the Counties of Monmouth and Hereford*, (London, 1680) p. 8.
[16] Ibid, pp. 18-21.

highlights the degree to which conflict over resources, even the simple presence of a distinct and separate group, can lead to increased in-group identification and conflict.[17] The periodic fluctuations in tension between Catholic and Protestant groups can be seen as reflecting a wider political contest over political control in the aftermath of the Civil Wars and during the disruption of the 1688 Revolution. SIT aids explanation of how this conflict and the anti-Catholic political discourse that had underpinned the persecution of Catholics for more than a century, affected the culture of Catholics and shaped their identity.[18] Rather than simply seeing intergroup relations between Catholics and Protestants and the formation of Catholic identity, as two separate social issues, RCT and SIT help to identify the key psychological consequences that underscored them. Perhaps most intriguingly, SIT also provides insight into the complex way in which social identity was influenced not just through a shared sense of faith and belief, but also through a conception of their dissimilarity and otherness to Protestant groups. The negative stereotype created by anti-papists acted as a direct challenge to Catholics' positive self-image, and required them to deploy a number of psychological strategies in order to combat its negative effects. Intriguingly, deeper analysis of the actions of individuals like the martyr St David Lewis, reveal that similar attempts to raise self-esteem through the creation of a positive social identity can be seen on both sides of the confessional divide. However, the role of individual personality remains clear, as, despite the similarities of their psychological positions, Lewis sought to embrace the identity of the martyr through an act of self-sacrifice,

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[17] M. Sherif, O. J. Harvey, B. J. White, W. R. Hood and C. W. Sherif, *The Robbers Cave: Experiment: Intergroup Conflict and Cooperation* (Middleton, Wesleyan University Press, 1961), *passim.*
[18] H. Tajfel, "Experiments in intergroup discrimination", *SA*, 223, 5, 1970, pp. 96–102; H. Tajfel, "Social psychology of intergroup behaviour", *ARP*, 33, 1982, pp. 1-39; H. Tajfel and J. C. Turner, "The social identity theory of intergroup behaviour", in W. G. Austin and S. Worchel (eds) *Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, (Chicago, Nelson-Hall Publishers, 1986) pp. 7-24; H. Tajfel, *Human groups and social categories: Studies in social psychology*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1981) p. 251.

while his enemy, John Arnold, sought self-aggrandisement through the vilification of others.

While this thesis has utilised theories drawn from other disciplines to explore alternative explanations of the deeper psychological experiences of Catholics, it has also focused on more straightforward expressions of Catholic cultural life through discussion of the wide variety of religious practices that continued to flourish during the late seventeenth century. The religious life of Welsh Catholics reflected older traditions of pilgrimage and the veneration of saints, as well as the need to observe the sacraments within the few private chapels that still survived. The lingering appeal of saintly shrines often associated with holy wells and natural landmarks could be interpreted as evidence of the superstitious beliefs that have been seen by some historians as the main reason for Catholicism's lingering appeal in post-Reformation Wales. However, such views would ignore the degree to which such practices also accommodated newer conceptions of Catholic worship and were used and adapted by missionary priests working in the Principality. While Walsham commented upon the degree to which medieval and contemporary practices were accommodated at the pilgrimage centre at Holywell, there had been little discussion of such practices in South Wales.[19] However, in the Catholic community of Monmouthshire, the observance of the sacraments at ancient sites like the Skirrid Fawr suggest that ancient, traditions could be compatible with Tridentine emphasis of these most key rituals of the Church.

The variety of sacred spaces and religious activities that formed Catholic culture in this period not only suggests that the community had not stagnated in the

[19] A. Walsham, "Holywell: contesting sacred space in post-Reformation Wales", in Coster and Spicer, *Sacred Space*, pp. 211-36.

post-Reformation era, but that the social relationships that afforded access to such spaces and rituals may have been more complex than has been previously acknowledged. In the past, historians have attributed activities conducted at sacred wells and pilgrimage shrines as examples of the superstitions that lingered in the region, reflecting neither contemporary Catholic values nor the pre-Christian religious culture from which they originated. The rituals practiced at holy wells were perceived as having lost their original meaning, transforming such sites from shrines into wishing wells.[20] However, such views reflect a limited approach to Catholic history that does not discuss the social significance that meant that these sites continued to be used for acts of devotion over a century after the Reformation. By examining the art, architecture and geography of these places, the complex nature of Catholic cultural life is revealed. To ignore the degree to which some of these sites offered Catholics, excluded from public religious spaces, the opportunity to express their faith misses a crucial non-literate element within Catholic culture. The users of such spaces were not only those wealthier Catholics who are also represented in the manuscript and printed records of this period, but also those who occupied lower positions in society and whose perspectives and experiences are often difficult to access. The use of chapels, pilgrimage sites and holy shrines by Catholics suggests that a deeper significance was attached to the religious rituals that were being performed at these locations. The use of these sacred spaces as locations in which rites of passage and significant spiritual experiences were marked and celebrated, demonstrates their importance as a means by which Catholics could build a shared sense of their social

[20] Williams, "Wales and the Reformation", pp. 11-38; J. and C. Bord, *Sacred Waters: Holy Wells and Water Lore in Britain and Ireland* (London, Granada, 1985); Williams, *Wales and the Reformation*, pp. 26-7, 280.

identity. They also represent the physical ways in which Catholics continued to express their religious views and circumvent the limitations placed on them by the law.

The variety of sacred spaces used by Catholics also suggests that the social relationships that bound the community together and facilitated access to religious worship were complex. While the wealthiest members of the Catholic elite, like the Morgans of Llantarnum, did maintain private chapels in their homes, they were not the only means of accessing the sacraments and the priesthood that performed them.[21] Some middling families also possessed chapels, occasionally decorated to a remarkable level. The Gunter family were far from the highest levels of Catholic society in Monmouthshire, and yet their Abergavenny chapel was frequented by numerous Catholics from the town.[22] Priests from the Jesuit mission were accessible at these chapels and at the less salubrious barns and outhouses, which were well attended, even to the point of overcrowding in some instances.[23] Catholics in North Wales also had access to a decorated, formal religious building in the form of the shrine of St Winifrid at Holywell. The development of inns around the town to accommodate pilgrims by both the secular and Jesuit missionaries suggests the importance of this centre not only to those living in the surrounding area, but to communities across the north west of England.[24] Analysis of these buildings and their use reveals the ability of Welsh Catholics of many different social levels to express their faith through a variety of religious rituals.

The degree to which Welsh Catholics could be seen to have incorporated contemporary trends in religious culture that were also evident amongst European and English Catholic communities, was another important consideration in this thesis.

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[21] Trevor, *An Abstract of Several Examinations*, pp. 3-12.
[22] Ibid, p. 8.
[23] Ibid, p. 6.
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This thesis sought to explore and apply some of the ideas proposed by historians of English and European Catholicism to the social and cultural history of the community in Wales.[25] Whereas the Welsh historiography has focused on those Catholics that chose to practice recusancy and endure the financial and social difficulties created by such a position, this study broadened its definition of Catholicism to include those who externally conformed to the state's requirements. While church popery amongst English Catholics had attracted considerable attention, in Wales it has not been discussed as mechanism for dealing with the economic and social pressures that were experienced by non-Anglican religious minorities.[26] It would appear that even in areas that were located away from the centres of power and operated significant levels of toleration, Catholics were not able to resist the pressure to conform. In the later decades of the seventeenth century, families continued to pragmatically choose to raise sons as church papists while maintaining practicing Catholicism down the female line.[27] The existence of clear examples of externalised conformity amongst Welsh Catholics suggests that it cannot simply be argued that Catholicism flourished in the region due to neglect and lack of provision by the Established Church.[28] Clearly, even in the relatively calm period of the 1660s, some Catholic families still felt it necessary to secure their protection from persecution through external submission to the requirements of the state.[29]

Amongst Welsh families that were financially able or brave enough to support priests or maintain private chapels, wider contact with the Catholic world was easier

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[25] Walsham, 'Miracles and the Counter-Reformation Mission to England', pp. 779-815; McClain, *Lest We Be Damned*, pp. 234, 236-237; Williams, "Forbidden Sacred Spaces in Reformation England" pp. 95-112; Walsham, *Charitable Hatred: Tolerance and intolerance in England, 1500-1700* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2006) pp. 101-112.
[26] A. Walsham, *Church Papists: Catholicism, Conformity and Confessional Polemic in Early Modern England*, 1993, Boydell, Woodbridge.
[27] For details of how this religious practice functioned in the Milborne family, see Appendix D.
[28] Lambeth Palace Library, MS 930/33
[29] P. Jenkins, "Anti-popery on the Welsh Marches in the seventeenth century", *HJ*, 23, 1980, p. 279.

to facilitate. The communities of both North and South Wales were served by priests drawn from local families.[30] However, the education of these men in Continental seminaries and the experience of some in leading the colleges that trained young men for their vocations, suggest that their lives were far from parochial.[31] These men formed a wider network that linked Catholics on the Continent with those that lived in territories outside of the control of Catholic rulers. It would be fundamentally misleading to see the Catholics of Wales as being captive within a medieval religious culture with little contact with the far-reaching changes that were shaping both Catholic and Protestant Europe.

In these respects, Catholics on the Welsh borders shared similar experiences with their co-religionists living in other parts of the British Isles, as well as those living under Protestant regimes on the Continent. Despite their geographical remoteness from the centres of power in the Catholic Church, individuals that chose to maintain their allegiance to Rome were still linked by their faith and their sense of identity and community. Their experience was also shaped by the culture, language and even geography of their native land.

As well as sharing similarities with the story of their co-religionists in other parts of Europe, the way in which Welsh Catholics adapted their religious culture, practices and identity through their contact with other, more dominant religious groups also resonates with the history of other religious minorities. The shifting power structures of Europe from ancient to modern times have meant that a wide variety of churches and sects, even whole religious bodies, have emerged to dominate and been subjugated in their turn. The political or social need for states to impose religious

[30] J. M. Cleary, *A Checklist of Welsh Students in the Seminaries, Part 1, 1568-1603* (Cardiff, Newman Association, 1958) pp. 8-9.
[31] Ibid.

homogeneity on their subjects, however unsuccessfully, has only recently come to be seen as an infringement of the citizen's rights. In societies such as early modern Wales, it was considered as legitimate expression of the state's power. By delving below the cultural differences that separate such groups, the fundamental similarity of their experiences as minorities within a more dominant religious tradition becomes apparent. Adaptation and reform of how the relationship between self and society is clearly a common thread that can be seen in the patterns of behaviour of Jews, Muslims, Catholics and Protestants that found themselves in the minority as a result of the shifting of political boundaries that characterised the late medieval and early modern eras.[32] In societies where universal conceptions of truth hold sway, the failure to adapt, even just outwardly conform to state's requirements, could lead to disastrous consequences, as testified by the litany of inquisitions, persecutions and low level discrimination that punctuated life in this period of Europe's history.

However, to accept that the history of Catholicism in late seventeenth century Wales are only comparable within the early modern period, ignores the degree to which intergroup relations in the modern era differ little in their fundamental basis. The multifarious divisions within twenty-first-century Welsh society are undoubtedly more religiously, ethnically and linguistically complex than those that existed in the previous 350 years. However, the fundamental need for the individual to define their position within society through comparison, using perceptions of sameness and difference to create a sense of social belonging, seems to remain a fundamental part of life in a diverse society. To ignore such patterns overlooks the degree to which

[32] J. H. Edwards, "Religious Belief and Social Conformity: The 'Converso' Problem in Late Medieval Cordoba", *TRHS*, 5th Ser., 31,1981, pp. 115-128; P. Zagorin, "The Historical Significance of Lying and Dissimulation", *SR*, 63, 3, 1996, pp. 863-912; M. Bodian, "In the Cross-Currents of the Reformation: Crypto-Jewish Martyrs of the Inquisition 1570-1670", *PP*, 176, 2002, pp. 66-104

similarities and differences are relative, but were equally important in 1700 as they are today.

One of the major challenges in writing a history of Catholicism in early modern Wales was the degree to which this history was not recorded by those whose experiences I wished to investigate. As well as the inevitable difficulties of seventeenth-century documents surviving to the present, the nature of Catholicism in the early modern period has meant that such evidence was often hidden, deliberately destroyed, or not written down for fear of discovery. The criminality associated with many aspects of Catholic life, as well as the social persecution that could result from exposure, meant that followers of the Church of Rome were unlikely to record any details of their religious life. By contrast, manuscript and printed accounts written by those who sought to condemn Catholicism for various reasons are far more available historians of this period. Given the need to read source materials against the grain, inferring what might have been from cross-referencing with those few accounts that remain from Catholics themselves, it might seem that this is not a history that can be accurately explored. Catholic history in Wales is an area of the country's past that is little known beyond a narrow academic circle, which perhaps reflects the fact that it is a history that is difficult to untangle from the martyrologies and national myths that have over-run it.

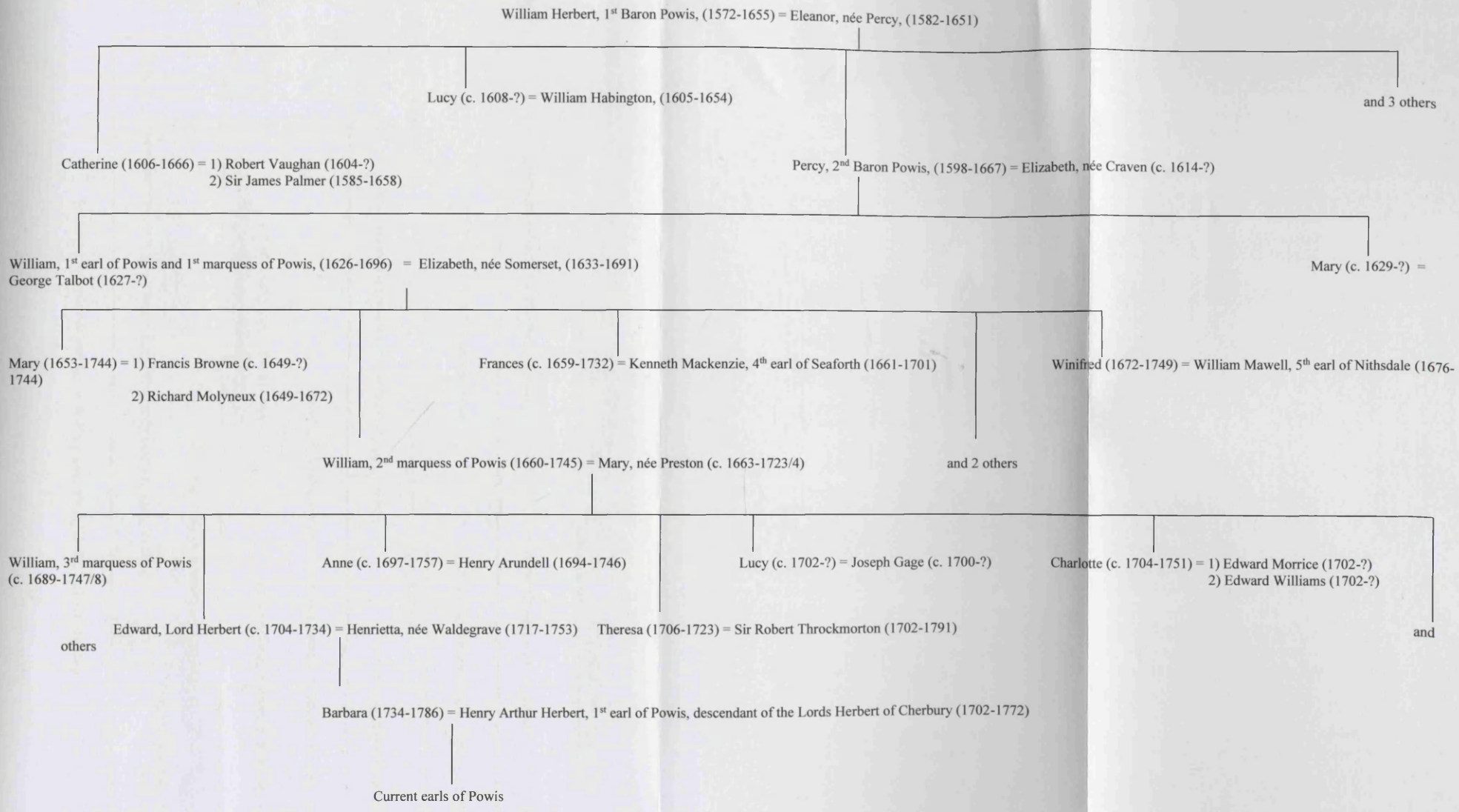
However, in the documents that have survived to the modern day, there are glimpses of a community whose experiences and beliefs were an important part of the Wales' cultural inheritance. Moreover, their lives also form part of the evermore complex tapestry of religious and political history that has emerged from early modern Europe. An important part of this aspect of cultural history has been the inclusion of

the histories of minorities, both religious and ethnic, creating a richer and more complete picture of a continent in flux.

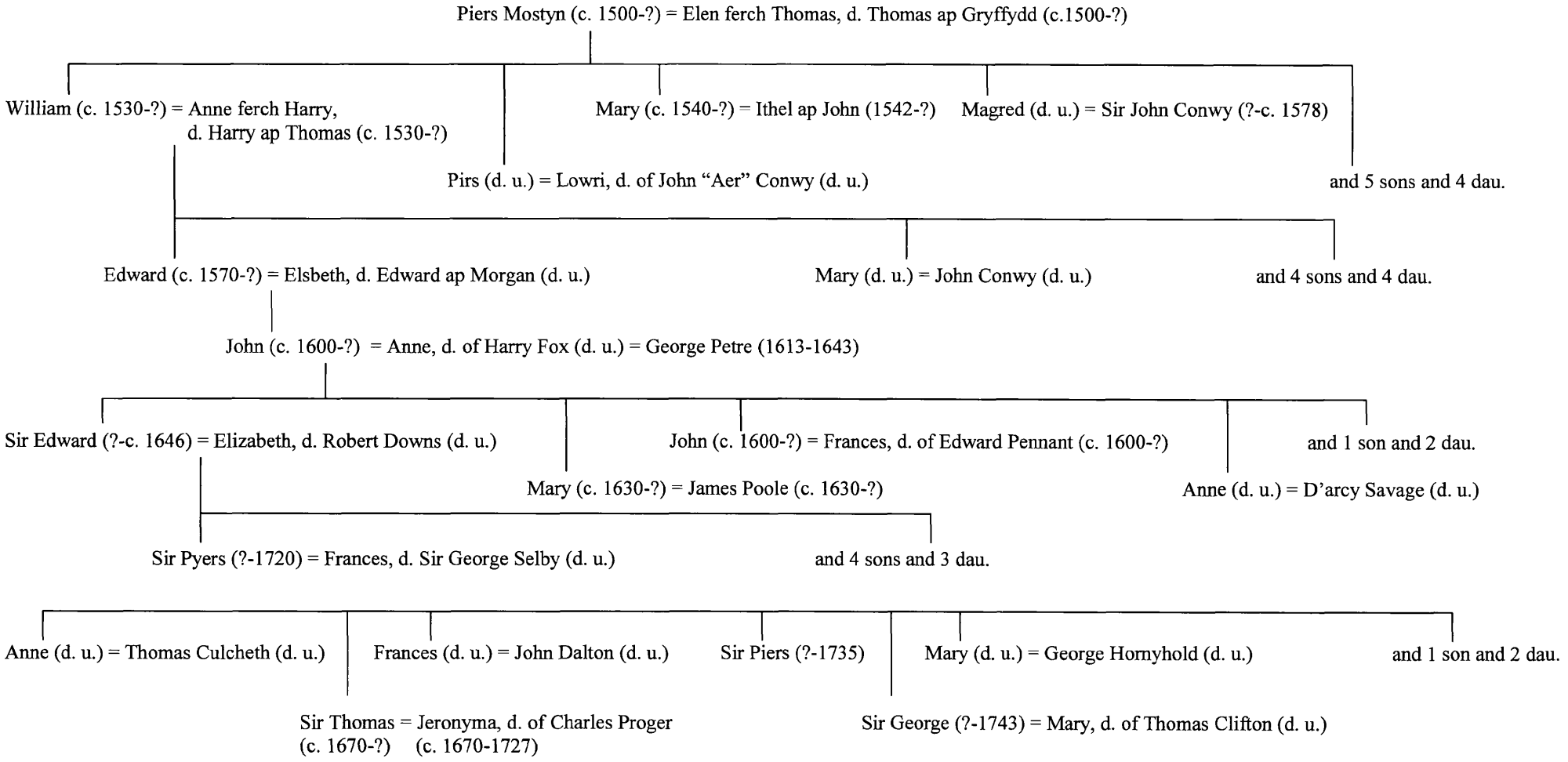
This is no less true of the history of late seventeenth-century Wales. As this study has shown, the Catholics of Principality have not always been able to speak directly to us from the past, instead being glimpsed in the often hostile descriptions of others. However, it is surely as important for historians to record and discuss the lives of those who are neglected and ignored in the main thrust of history, as it is to examine those that seek to shape the views of posterity. In this vein, it is as essential that the story of early modern Catholics is heard as it is for the Anglicans, Anabaptists and Quakers that lived alongside them. By placing the lives of Catholics within the wider context of Wales' dynamic and sometimes conflicted religious culture, an important aspect of the country's history emerges. Furthermore, the patterns of tolerance and persecution, identity and community that can be discerned in the manuscripts, pamphlets, art and architecture of this period still chime with modern concerns over social cohesion and cultural expression. In an increasingly diverse Wales, questions of religious co-habitation, tolerance and identity still play a crucial role in the political landscape. By re-examining the history of Catholicism in these lands, the consequences of emphasising interdependence or intolerance are brought into stark clarity, as we continue to face the question of whether distinct communities can co-exist in tolerant harmony or must slide into discordant division.

Appendices and Photographic Plates

Appendix A – Partial family tree of the Herbert Family of Powis Castle, showing connections to members of the Catholic aristocracy and gentry

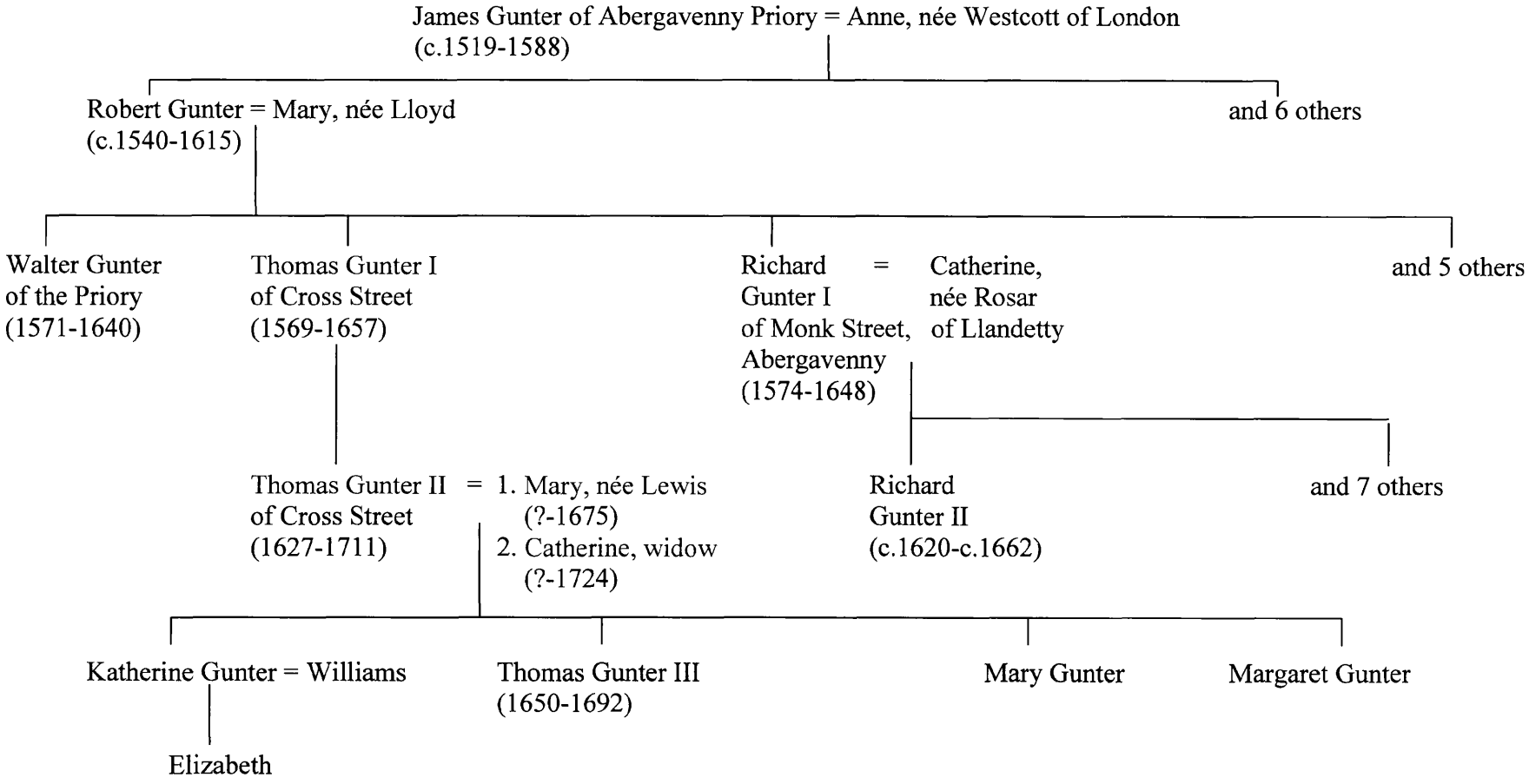


Appendix B – Partial Family Tree of the Mostyn Family of Talacre

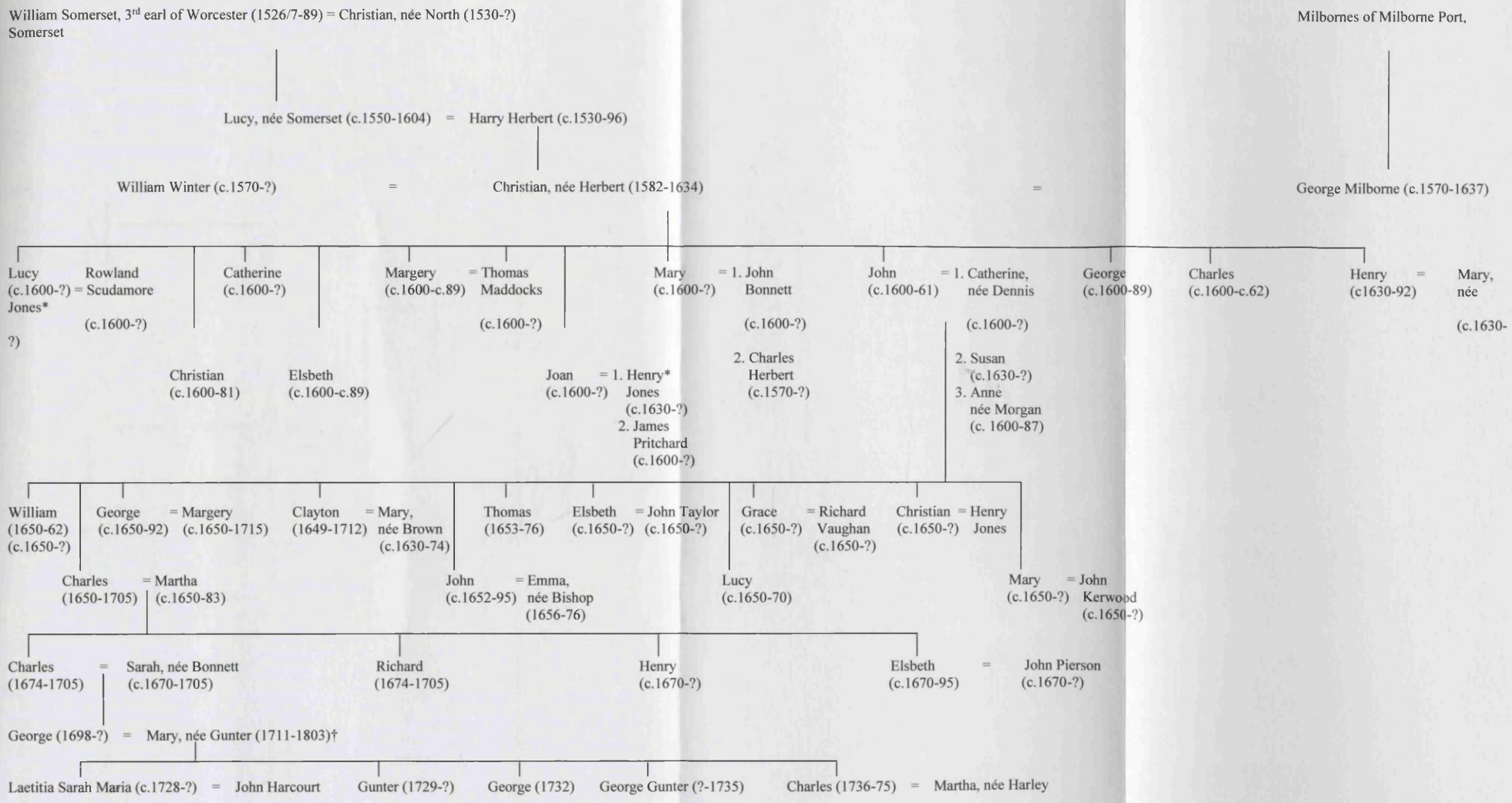


Appendix C - Partial family tree of the Gunter Family, c.1500-c.1730

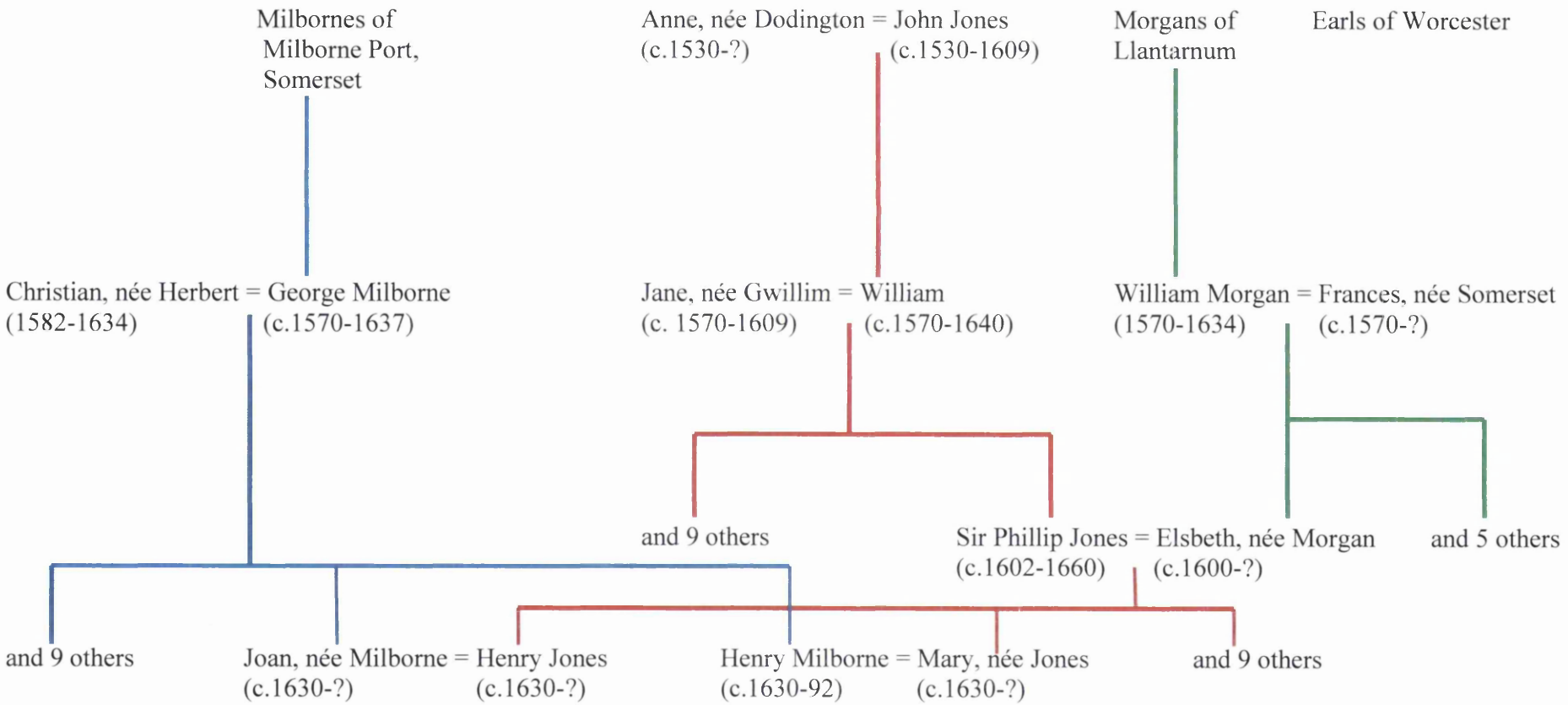
Taken from the family tree devised by G. W. Gunter in NLW MS Martin Cleary 33



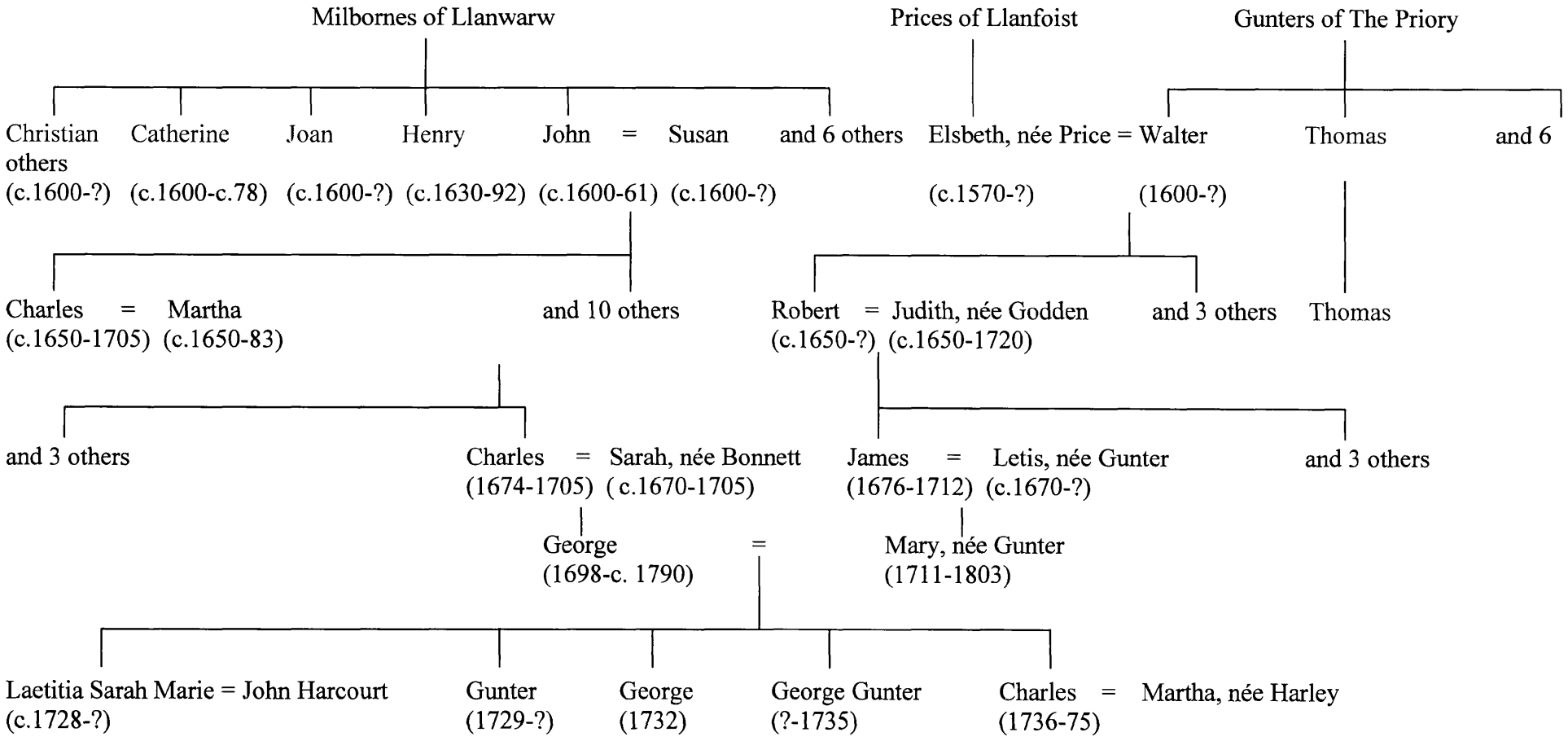
Appendix D – Milborne Family Tree (c. 1500-c.1800)



Appendix E - Partial family trees of the Milbornes of Llanwarw, the Joneses of Treowen and the Morgans of Llantarnum

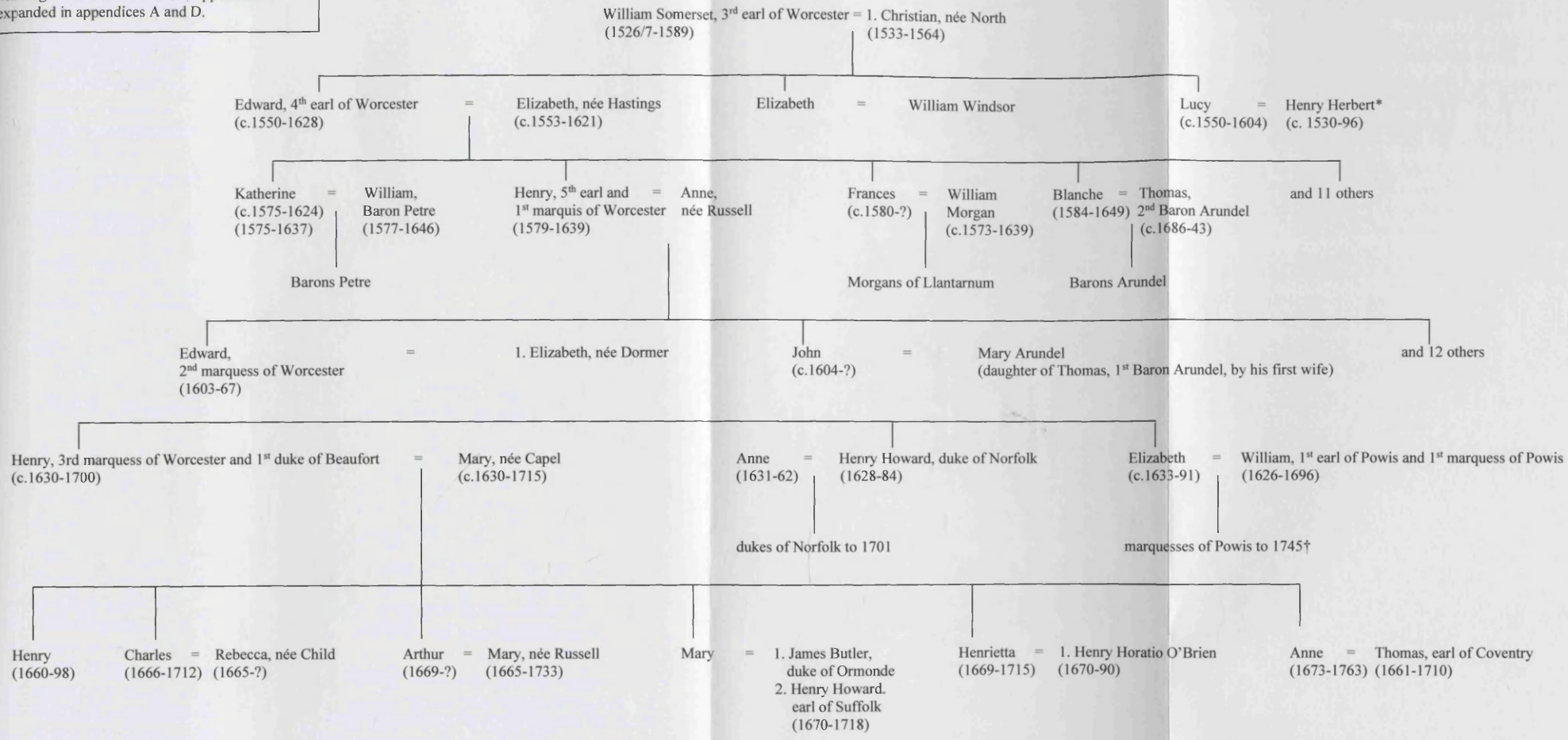


Appendix F - Connected branches of the Milbornes of Llanwarw and the Gunters of The Priory, Abergavenny

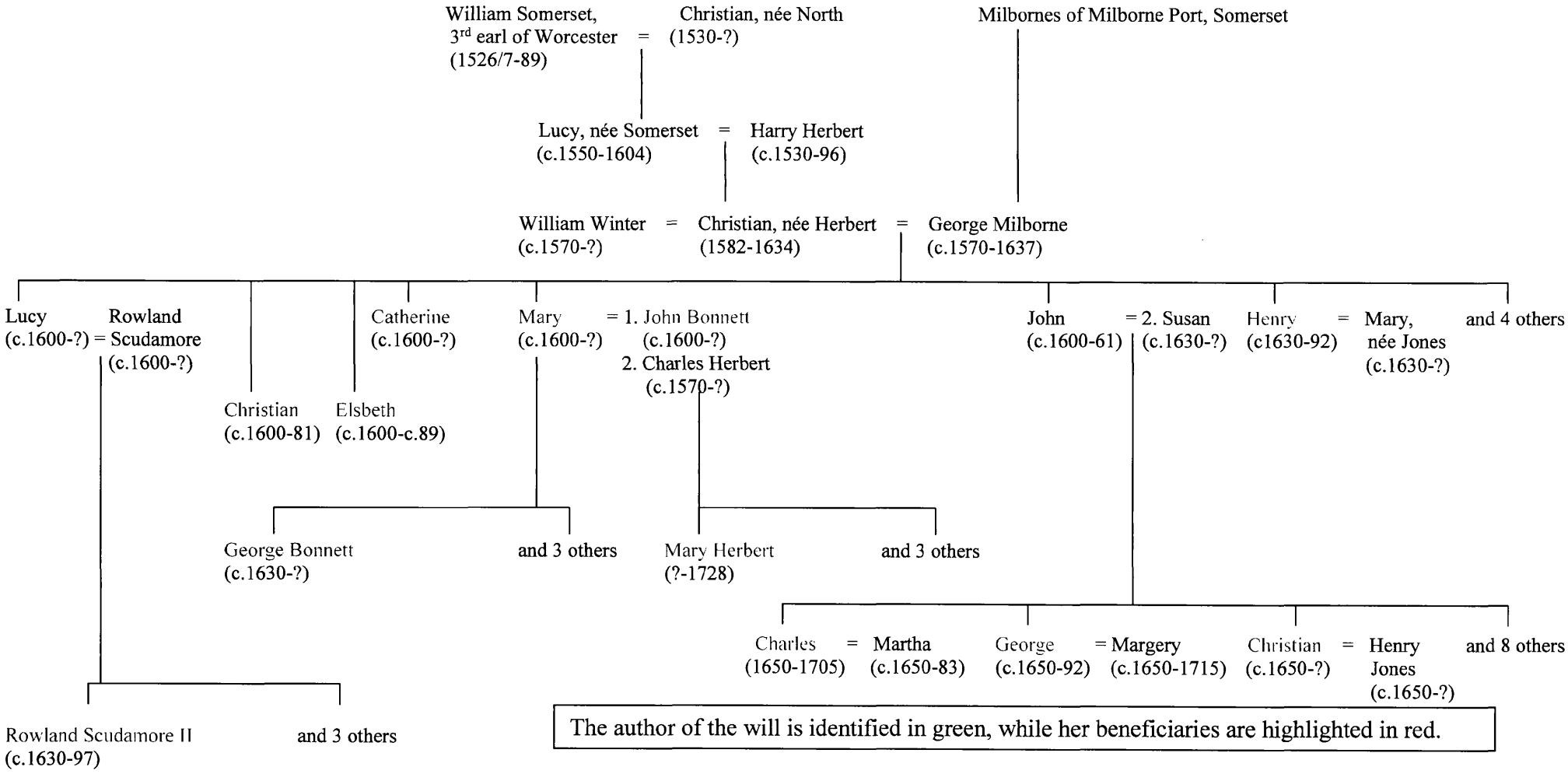


Appendix G - Partial family tree of the Somersets showing familial connections to the Milbornes, Morgans, Barons Petre, Powis and Arundell, c.1526-c.1700

Marriages marked with * and † appear and are expanded in appendices A and D.

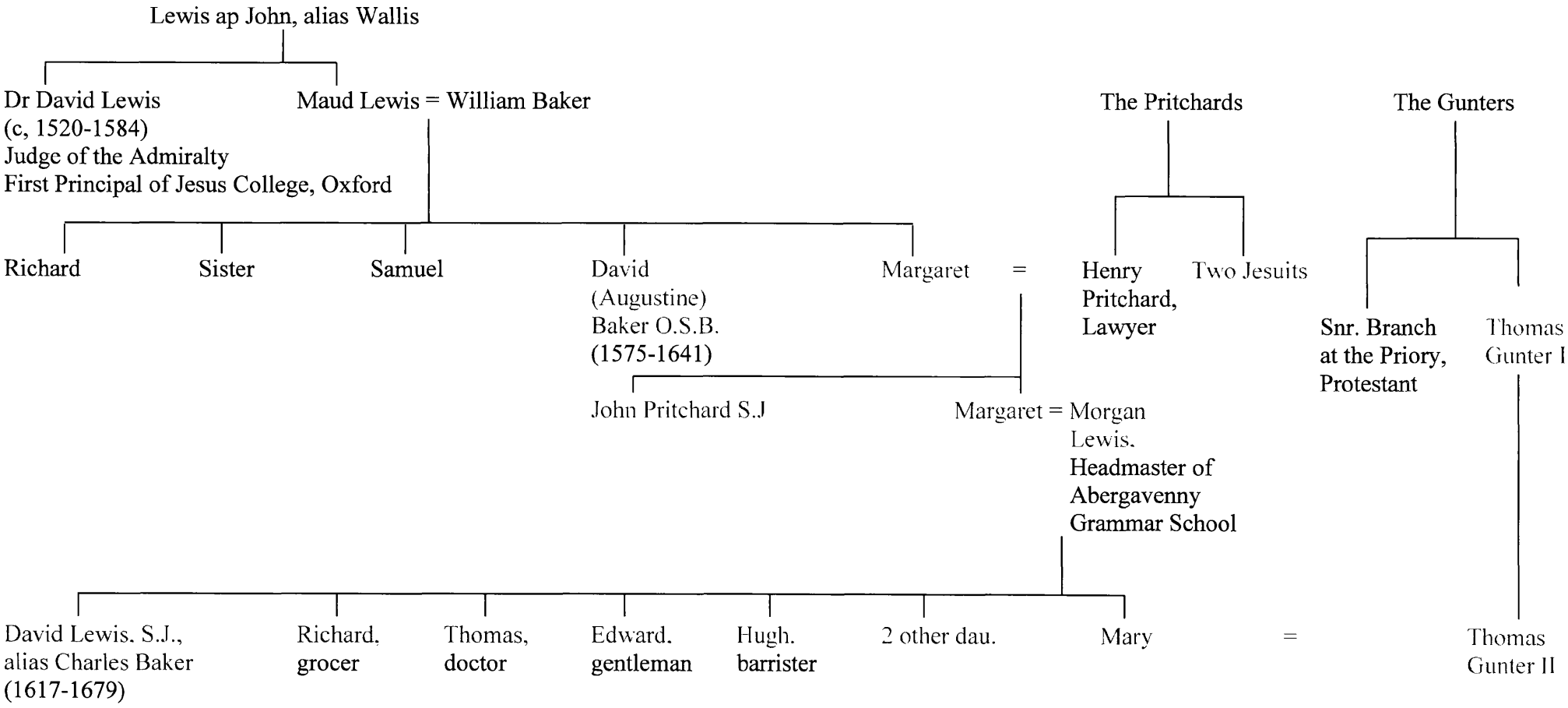


Appendix H – Partial Milborne family tree showing the beneficiaries of Christian Milborne's will



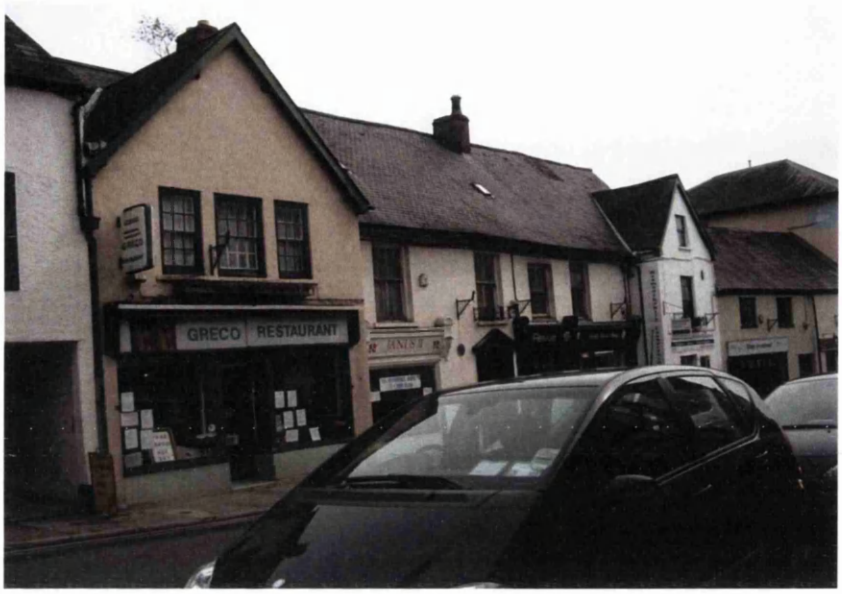
Appendix I - Partial Family Pedigrees of the Lewis, Baker and Gunter Families

Taken from NLW MSS Martin Cleary 33 and Canning



Photographic Plates

Plate 1

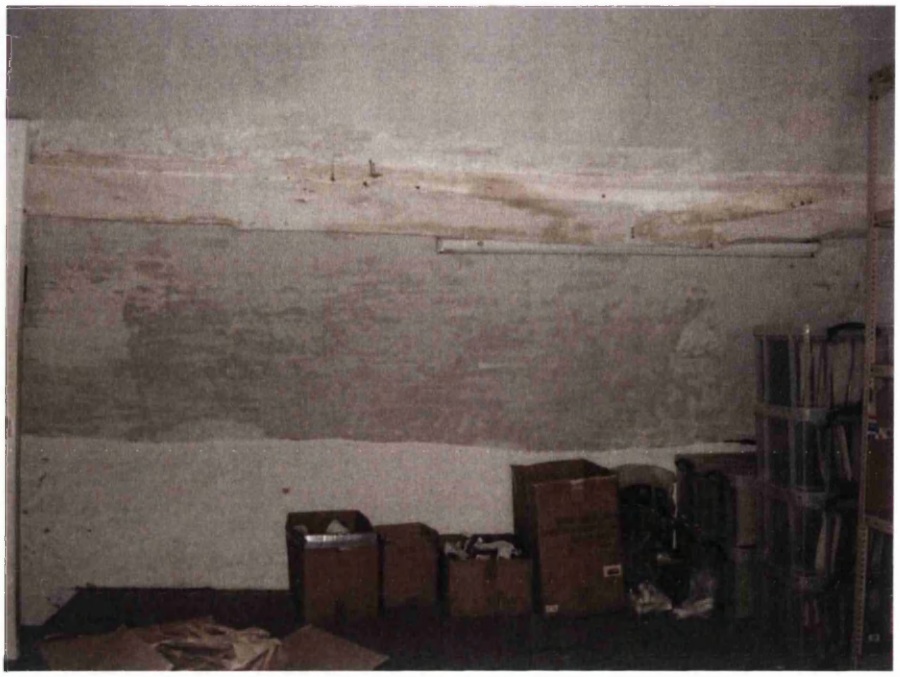


The Gunter Mansion in Cross Street, Abergavenny. The mansion originally contained only the area from the right gable end to the property currently occupied by the Janus II shop. The Cherub Room is located on the second floor, in the middle of the building.

Plate 2

External view of the chapel maintained by the Gunter family. The chapel was located in the attic space of the end gable of the mansion, with a small window shown here on the top floor of the building. Rediscovered in the early twentieth century, a steep wooden staircase was constructed to reconnect the attic with the lower floors.

Plate 3



Interior of the Gunter chapel, showing the raised platform that sits at one end of the small room.

Plate 4

Interior of the Gunter chapel looking towards the window that faces Cross Street.

Plate 5

Detail of the plaster above the window facing Cross Street. When the chapel was first discovered the letters IHS and a flaming heart were painted on the plaster above the window. Unfortunately, subsequent owners of the property have painted over these artefacts.

Plate 6

Graffiti found in the Gunter chapel in the early twentieth century. Various explanations of the meaning of the graffiti have been put forward, with some suggesting it is a record of marriages performed in the chapel.

Plate 7

The mural depicting the Adoration of the Magi found in the Gunter Chapel in 1912. It was removed from the wall and the chapel and is housed in Abergavenny Museum.

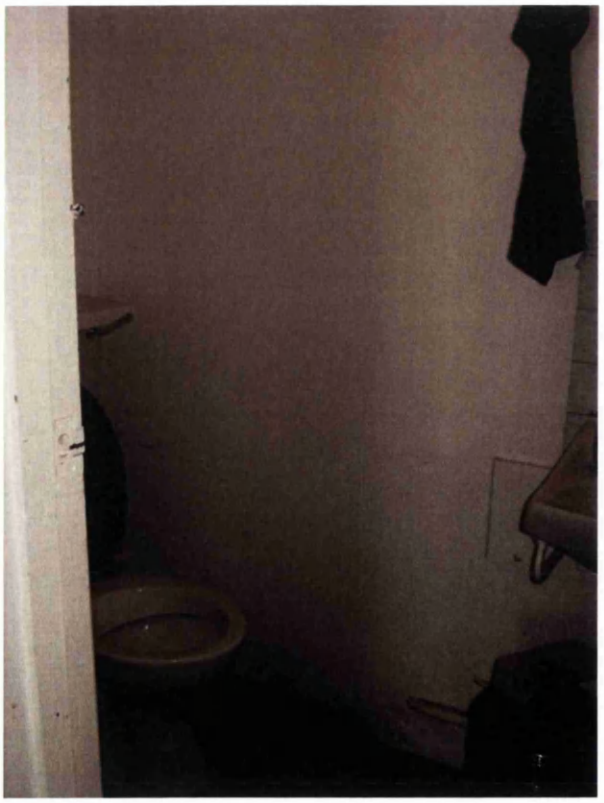


Plate 8

A former priest-hole at the Gunter mansion, located immediately to the side of the stairs to the attic chapel. The priest-hole was discovered when the building was re-furbished in the early twentieth century. Other priest-holes are reported to have discovered in the 1950s, but access can no longer be gained to this part of the building because of its poor state of repair.

Plate 9

The back of the Gunter Mansion, which was originally the main access point. The chapel is located in the roof space above the leftmost gable.

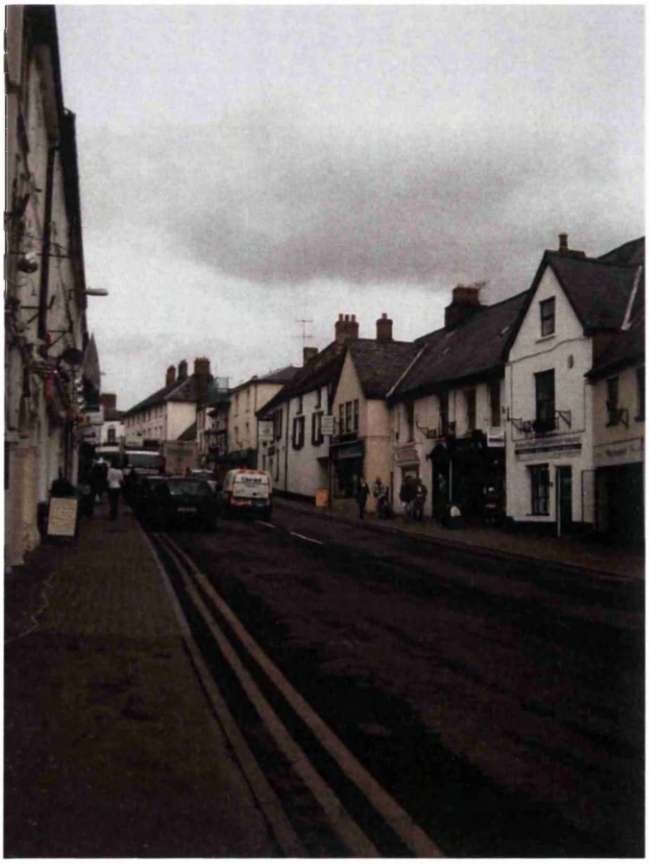


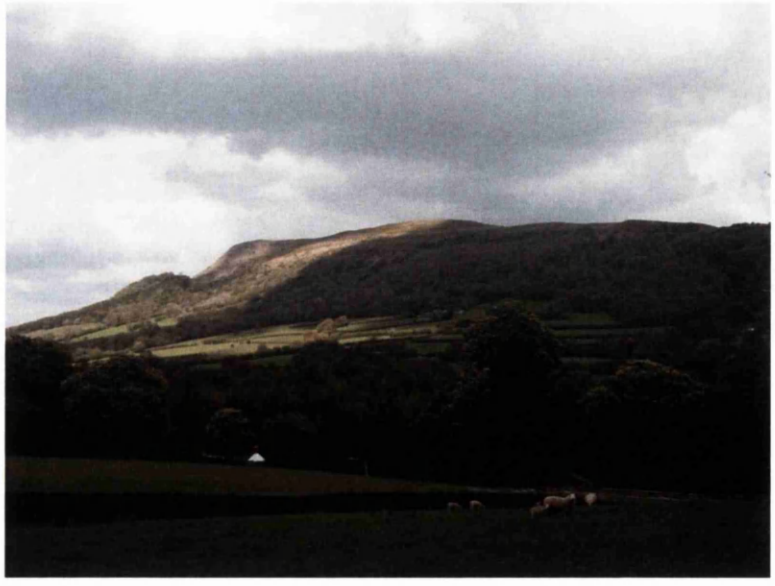
Plate 10

Modern Cross Street, Abergavenny. In the Gunter's day the road would have been lower, but was a significant road leading into the town centre.

Plate 11

Photograph showing the proximity of the Gunter Mansion to the parish church. The lane in the foreground leads to the back of the Gunter Mansion, which is just visible through the trees. The trees and cottages blocking separating the mansion and the church are nineteenth and twentieth century constructions. In the seventeenth century, the view between the two buildings was uninterrupted.

Plate 12



The holy mountain of Ysgirrid Fawr, viewed from the west. The mountain is located approx. 4.5 km from Abergavenny . The remains of a small chapel can be found on the summit, and are still consecrated.

Plate 13

St John's and St Peter's Wells (left and right respectively), Bishopston, near Swansea. Offerings of flowers, candles and prayers are placed inside St Peter's Well by those who continue to seek divine assistance and guidance.

Plate 14

Detail of a votive candle offering left alongside St Peter's Well. The well can be seen emerging from between the stones in the foreground

Plate 15

Effigies of the missing and the sick left in trees near St John's and St Peter's Well by pilgrims to the site. The holy wells of Wales have been associated with heads and skulls since pre-Christian times when the skulls of ancestors or vanquished enemies were placed inside holy wells and springs. In the Christian era, the skulls and heads of saints became associated with holy springs through legend and ritual.

Plate 16

Detail of the effigies of the sick and missing left in the trees around St John's and St Peter's Wells.

Plate 17

The remains of the chapel of St John and St Peter located adjacent to saints' wells in Bishopston, near Swansea.

Plate 18

An unnamed holy well located under Arthur's Stone on Cefn Bryn on the Gower Peninsula, Glamorgan. An offering of a daffodil has been left in the well and is just visible in the top left hand corner of the photograph.

Plate 19

Arthur's Stone on Cefn Bryn with the countryside of the Gower, Glamorgan and Carmarthenshire in the distance. Arthur's Stone is an Iron Age burial site.

Plate 20

The Great Cairn on Cefn Bryn, the Gower Peninsula, Glamorgan. The Cairn is the site of an Iron Age burial and lies several hundred metres from two holy wells.

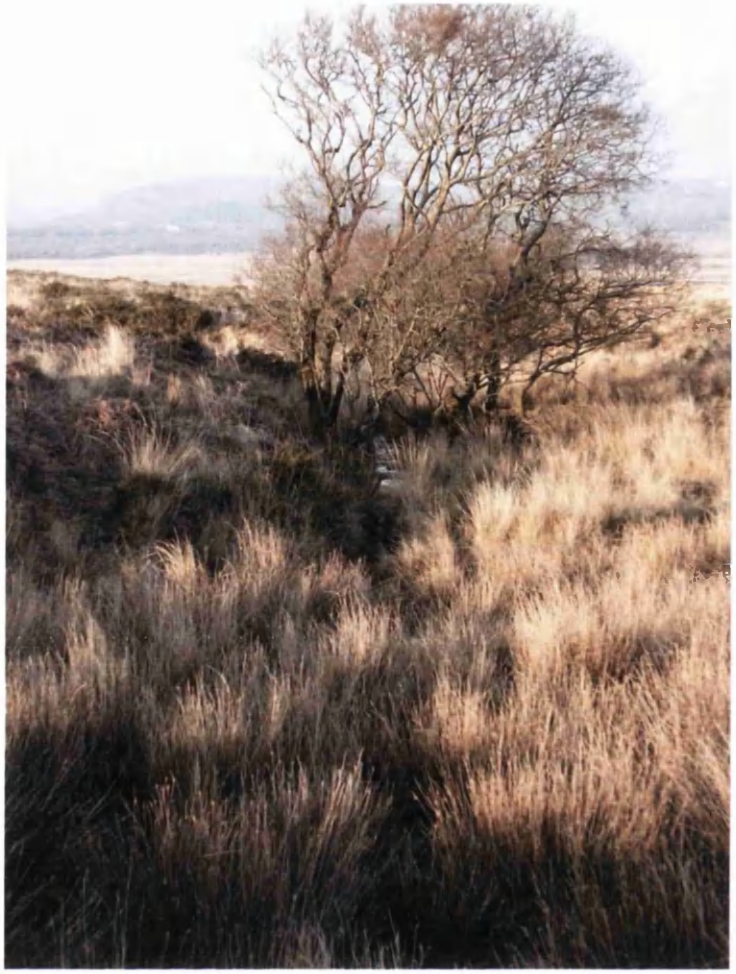


Plate 21

The stream arising from Ffynnon Fair, with views of the Gower, Glamorgan and Carmarthenshire in the distance.

Plate 22

Ffynnon Fair on Cefn Bryn on the Gower Peninsula. Pilgrims to this well threw pins into the water as votive offerings.

Plate 23

The valley in which St Anthony's Well lies, located in Llansteffan, Carmathenshire.

Plate 24

The entrance to St Anthony's Well.

Plate 25
Saint Anthony's Well and plaque.

Plate 26

The shrine to St Anthony located directly opposite his well. He holds a small offering of wild foliage and berries.

Plate 27

St Anthony's Well with votive offerings of shells, candles and prayers. Shells are the traditional offerings that have been left at this well since the earliest days of its use. The scallop shell is the traditional symbol of pilgrimage because of its use as a portable eating implement by pilgrims to Santiago de Compostela.

Plate 28

Detail of the shell, candle and flower offerings, as well as prayers, left at St Anthony's Well

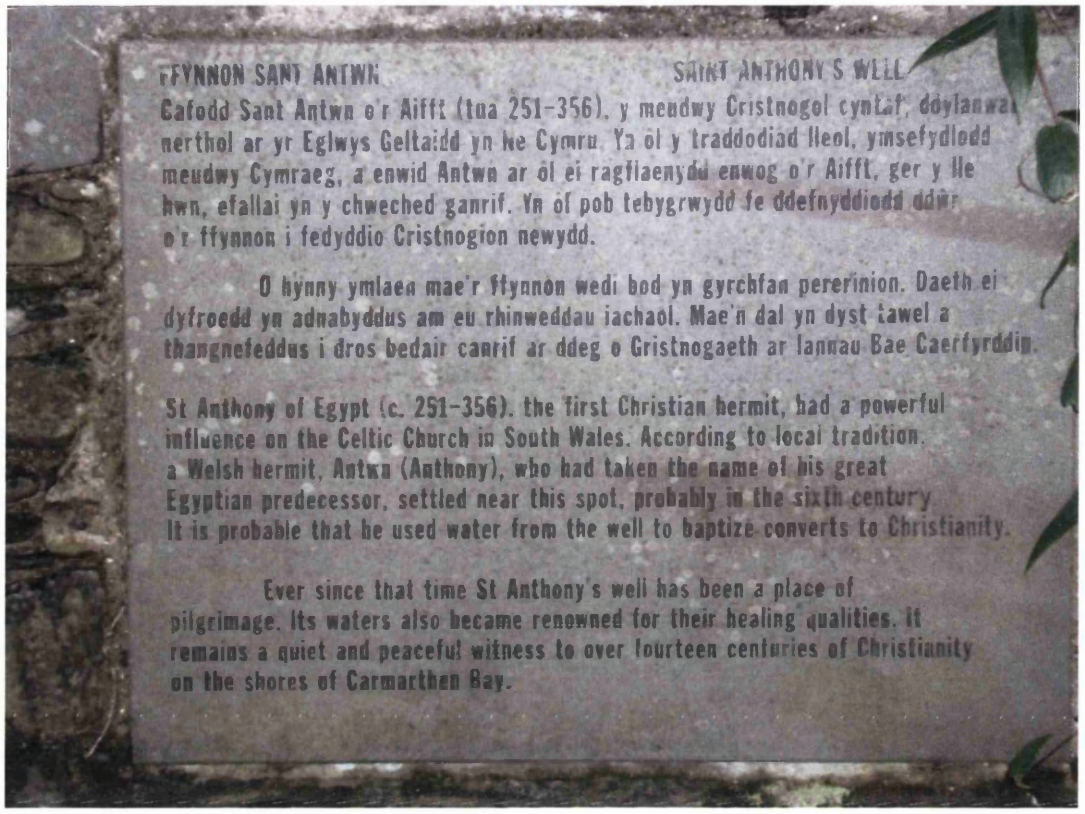
Plate 29

Detail of a votive candle at St Anthony's Well with prayer read 'Saint Anthony Pray for us and bless our home'.

Plate 30

Llansteffan beach that lies at the end of the valley in which St Anthony's Well is located. The beach provides a vast quantity of shells from which pilgrims can chose their offerings

Plate 31



The plaque erected next to St Anthony's Well. It reads:

'St Anthony of Egypt (c. 251-356), the first Christian hermit, had a powerful influence on the Celtic Church in South Wales. According to local tradition, a Welsh hermit, Antwn (Anthony), who had taken the name of his great Egyptian predecessor, settled near this spot, probably in the sixth century. It is probable that he used water from the well to baptize converts to Christianity.

Ever since that time St Anthony's well has been a place of pilgrimage. Its waters also became renowned for their healing qualities. It remains a quiet and peaceful witness to over fourteen centuries of Christianity on the shores of Carmathen Bay.'

Plate 32

Porthycarne Street in the Monmouthshire town of Usk. It was along this road that Lewis was transported on the day of his execution.

Plate 33

The Catholic Church of SS Francis Xavier and David Lewis, located opposite the site of St David Lewis' execution.

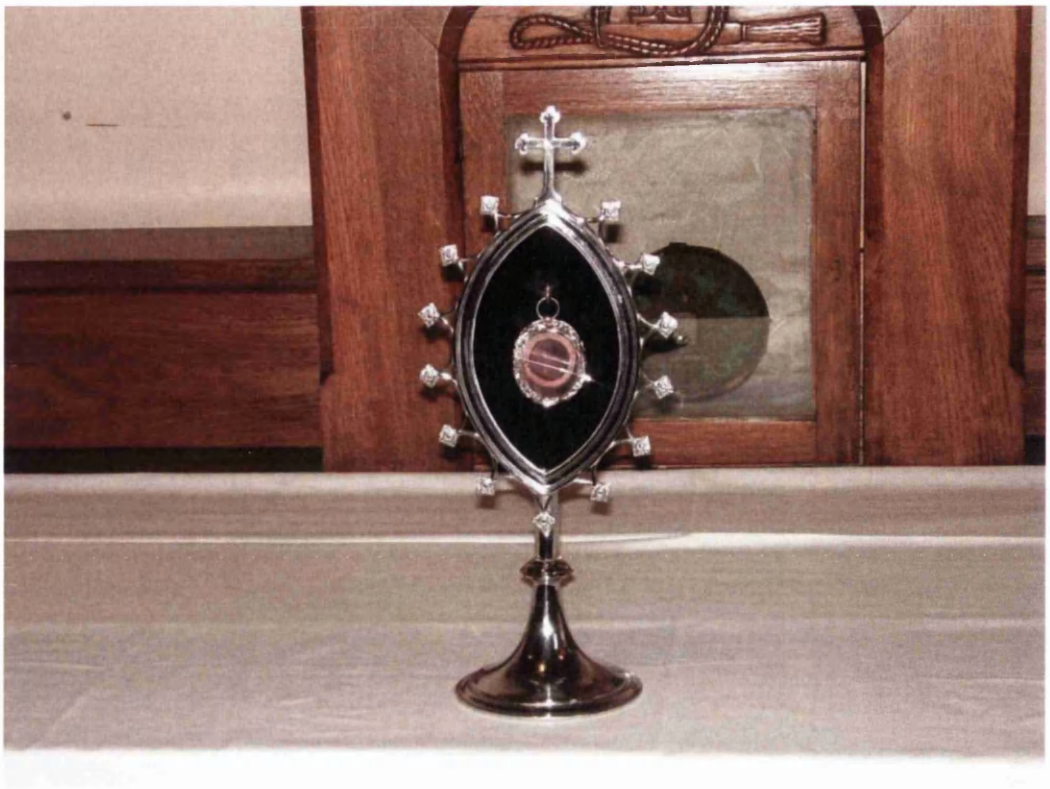
Plate 34

Shrine to St David Lewis located inside the SS Francis Xavier and David Lewis Catholic church in Usk. The portrait hanging above the shrine is a copy the original being kept with other relics of the saint in Llantarnam Abbey.

Plate 35

A relic of St David Lewis' bone, encased in a reliquary. This relic is kept in his shrine at the SS Francis Xavier and David Lewis Catholic church in Usk.

Plate 36



A relic of St David Lewis' bloodied shirt, encased in a reliquary. Kept at the SS Francis Xavier and David Lewis Catholic church in Usk.

Plate 37

Modern-day Frogmore Street in Abergavenny. It was to a property on this street that the Gunter's moved after the Popish Plot and opened a Catholic Chapel with the Franciscan mission during the reign of James II.

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